DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 617 CS 213 565

AUTHOR	Black, Laurel; And Others
TITLE	Handbook of Writing Portfolio Assessment: A Program for College Placement.
INSTITUTION	Miami Univ., Oxford, OH. Dept. of English.
SPONS AGENCY	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	[92]
NOTE	85p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Portfolio, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056 (free).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Advanced Placement; College Bound Students; Higher Education; *Portfolios (Background Materials); *Student Placement; *Writing Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	Alternative Assessment; *Miami University OH

ABSTRACT

A product of 3 years' experience in administering the Miami University Portfolio Writing Program, this handbook is designed to assist college faculty in administering a portfolio writing assessment program for incoming students (based on a collection of their best high school writing). The handbook's five chapters are: (1) Introduction: Portfolio Assessment and the Evaluation of Writing; (2) Contents of Portfolios; (3) Implementing a Portfolio Placement Program; (4) Scoring Writing Portfolios; and (5) Portfolio Assessment and the Teaching of Writing. (Nineteen references and a 17-item bibliography are attached. Appendixes include the 1993 description of portfolio contents, the 1993 guidelines for portfolio submission, the 1993 portfolio information form, the 1992 invitation to students, the 1992 scoring guide for portfolios, an "excellent" student portfolio, and a "very good" student portfolio.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED350617

Handbook of Writing Portfolio Assessment:

A Program for College Placement

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

by

Laurel Black, Miami University
Donald A. Daiker, Miami University
Jeffrey Sommers, Miami University—Middletown
Gail Stygall, University of Washington

CS213565

With the support of
The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Handbook of Writing Portfolio Assessment:

A Program for College Placement

by

Laurel Black, Miami University
Donald A. Daiker, Miami University
Jeffrey Sommers, Miami University—Middletown
Gail Stygall, University of Washington

With the support of
The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments		4
Preface		5
Chapter One.	Introduction: Portfolio Assessment and the Evaluation of Writing	7
Chapter Two.	Contents of Portfolios	15
Chapter Three.	Implementing a Portfolio Placement Program	27
Chapter Four.	Scoring Writing Portfolios	37
Chapter Five.	Portfolio Assessment and the Teaching of Writing	47
Works Cited		56
Bibliography		58
Appendix A.	1993 Description of Portfolio Contents	60
Appendix B.	1993 Guidelines for Portfolio Submission	61
Appendix C.	1993 Portfolio Information Form	62
Appendix D.	1992 Invitation to Students	63
Appendix E.	1992 Scoring Guide for Portfolios	64
Appendix F.	Portfolio by Marie Steele—"6" portfolio	65
Appendix G.	Portfolio by Matthew Cavanaugh—"4" portfolio	74

Acknowledgments

The printing and distribution of this handbook is made possible by a generous grant to Donald A. Daiker, Jeffrey Sommers, Gail Stygall, and Laurel Black from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education of the U. S. Department of Education. For its continued support, we are grateful to FIPSE and especially to our program officer, Jaymie Lewis.

Thanks to federal funding, we are able to distribute free copies of both this publication and *The Best of Miami University's Portfolios 1992*, a collection of complete portfolios and selections judged to be among the finest we received this past year. For either or both volumes, please write to Portfolio, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056 (513-529-7110).

When the portfolio program described in this handbook was established in 1990, Miami University became the first institution of higher learning to award entering students college credit and advanced placement in composition based on a collection of their best high school writing. The success of the program—in 1992 more than 15% of Miami's incoming students chose to submit a portfolio—owes much to the continued support of C. Barry Chabot, Chair of the Department of English, and of Max Morenberg and Susan Jarratt, past and current directors of the composition program. Important initial help came from Myrtis H. Powell, Vice President for Student Affairs; James McCoy, Vice President for Enrollment and Director of Admissions; Kenneth H. Bogard, Registrar; and Kathleen R. Qualls, Bursar.

Five truly outstanding secondary English teachers helped create Miami's portfolio program. They are Marilyn Elzey of Talawanda High School in Oxford; DJ Hammond of Madeira High School in Cincinnati; John Kuehn of Fairmont High School in Kettering; Teri Phillips of Mt. Healthy High School in Cincinnati; and Doris Riddle of Norwood High School in Cincinnati. Other high school teachers whose recommendations helped shape the program are Angela Brill of Mt. Healthy, Bob Dizney of Fairfield, Roseann Julian of Talawanda, Teresa McGowan of Hamilton, and Penni Meyer and Sharon Rab of Kettering Fairmont.

For their help with the annual portfolio scoring sessions and with large-scale assessment at Miami University, we are indebted to many of our colleagues in Miami University's English Department and especially to Debbie Bertsch, Bob Broad, Edwina Helton, John Heyda, Maggie Lindgren, Rory Ong, Diane Rawlings, Erica Scott, and Shannon Wilson.

For being the best administrative assistant anyone could possibly be, we give our warmest and heartfelt thanks to Cheryl Musselman.

And for providing their students with the time, opportunity, motivation, and encouragement that a writing portfolio requires, we acknowledge and applaud literally hundreds of outstanding high school English teachers in Ohio and across the country. Judging from the quality of high school writing we see in student portfolios, there's never been a time when writing has been taught more effectively and more successfully than now.

Laurel Black
Donald A. Daiker
Jeffrey Sommers
Gail Stygall

Preface

While many universities and colleges use portfolios to assess student writing for a variety of purposes, most portfolio assessment programs focus on writing produced by students in their college years. Using portfolios for placement of incoming students, however, requires students to submit work written before they matriculate at the university, and thus present different challenges to those administering the program. We offer this handbook to assist college faculty in administering a portfolio writing assessment program for incoming students. The information contained in the handbook is the product of our three-year experience, beginning in 1989, in administering the Miami University Portfolio Writing Program.

In this handbook we draw upon our particular experiences at Miami to offer an overview of the steps involved in developing a placement portfolio assessment program. But our experiences are offered not as examples of the way to do things but merely as one way.

The handbook consists of five chapters, a bibliography, and appendices. The chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 1. "Introduction: Portfolio Assessment and Evaluation of Writing": Offers an overview of the past three decades in writing assessment, tracing the movement toward writing portfolios and addressing important theoretical assumptions that ground portfolio assessment.
- Chapter 2. "Contents of Portfolios": Discusses practical and theoretical issues in deciding on the contents of a portfolio.
- Chapter 3. "Implementing a Portfolio Placement Program": Explains the steps necessary to establish a portfolio program; discusses feasibility and reliability.
- Chapter 4. "Scoring Writing Portfolios": Focuses on developing procedures for scoring writing portfolios and interpreting the scores.
- Chapter 5. "Portfolio Assessment and the Teaching of Writing": Discusses the potential effects of a placement portfolio assessment program upon students and writing instruction at both the college and high school levels.

- Bibliography: Offers a bibliography on portfolio assessment.
- Appendices: Includes contents, instructions/guidelines to students; information form; scoring guide; publicity materials; samples of student portfolios.

This handbook is designed to be read in sequence. However, since it is intended to serve as a reference source, its individual chapters stand alone and can be read out of sequence.

For further information contact:

PORTFOLIO
Department of English
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056

Chapter One

Portfolio Assessment and the Evaluation of Writing

In 1990, after growing dissatisfaction with its methods of awarding college credit and advanced placement to entering students, Miami University discarded its traditional composition proficiency examination—a single sitting, timed essay on an unannounced topic—in favor of a writing portfolio. Unlike the single-sitting exam, portfolio assessment allows students to use fully their skills and knowledge to rehearse, draft, revise, and edit their writing, and to self-evaluate by choosing which papers best demonstrate their ability. It allows for peer and teacher evaluation in the process of writing and time for students to consider those comments. As students select and revise their portfolio pieces, they must imagine them being evaluated in a new context, by different readers. In turn, readers are asked to enter the world the writer constructs through her portfolio. In evaluating the portfolio, readers consider their own as well as institutional standards; discussing and reading portfolios in a social setting, readers consider both the context in which each portfolio was written and the context in which it is being read. In this way, the portfolio provides a meeting place, a bridge for high school writers and college readers. Large scale portfolio assessment, then, reflects a model of learning and writing which acknowledges that writing and reading are social acts, processes that take us on a journey inward and outward.

Assessment: A Brief Background

Creating and administering a fair, representative, and accurate means of testing students' writing has been and continues to be a central problem of composition research. As Andrea Lunsford describes it in "The Past—and Future—of Writing Assessment," there is a continuing tension between our need to examine students' writing—for placement and achievement—and our dissatisfaction with the means of doing so. For the past twenty-five years, we have felt that tension in the form of arguments over direct and indirect measures of writing assessment. The debate over direct and indirect assessment has now largely shifted to research on a variety of

concerns connected to the reliability and validity of holistic assessment of single samples of writing. Miami University has moved beyond these concerns—and, we believe, answered many of them—through our writing portfolio assessment program.

The shift from indirect to direct assessment of writing was the result of a discipline-wide shift in teaching methods. During the 1950s and 1960s most teachers of writing assumed that transmitting knowledge "about" excellent essays was sufficient to train student writers. By the 1970s, however, researchers in composition had demonstrated that student writers also needed to know "how" writers produce texts, with extensive practice and guidance in producing their own texts. "Process" pedagogy, as this approach is often called, assumes that students will benefit from the opportunity to learn how to develop topics, to write drafts, to receive readers' commentary, to revise extensively, and to edit. Classroom practice and composition textbooks began to reflect this new emphasis on how writers compose their texts. The shift to emphasizing the process of text production, however, meant teaching and testing—still largely "objective"—were no longer mutually supportive.

Godshalk and others (1966) attempted to address that disjunction, developing a process by which samples of student writing could be scored holistically and meet acceptable standards of reliability and validity. But these samples were brief, really just short essay answers. Godshalk acknowledged then what has become a central question of direct assessment today.

> As in all essays written under test conditions, these place a premium on fluency and ability to write correctly and with some style in a first draft. In actual life situations the writer is seldom under such sharp limitations...It would be interesting to collect samples of writing completed over a period of several months under much freer conditions and see how scores based on these samples would be related to the measures we have developed (41, 1966).

More than twenty years later, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) attempted to do just that, looking at six essays written in a variety of modes by 270 first-year college students over the course of a semester (Breland, et al. 1987). But the essays were not treated as portfolios of writing, and by scoring each piece individually what ETS had essentially done was run a smaller-scale direct assessment six-fold. It is not surprising that ETS determined that such assessment was complicated and possibly difficult to manage on a large scale.

While the movement to direct assessment of writing samples produced under controlled situations lessens the distance between instruction and assessment, students and teachers using a process approach are still left with a significant problem: a single-sitting, impromptu essay exam neither tests the skills these students have been taught nor supports the connections between learning and writing that a process approach assumes. Recent research indicates that essay exams are an entirely different genre from essays (Popken, 1989). The two genres, Popken argues, may be complementary in their rhetorical demands and strategies, but they are not identical. So although essay exams have "face validity"—here, the use of student writing to assess student writing ability—there has been a growing sense that essay exams lack construct validity, that they are testing the skills involved in one, limited form of student writing. Thus current methods of writing assessment reflect a model of learning that has been, if not repudiated, certainly questioned, and this disjunction is both confusing and harmful. As Cooper and Odell (1977) warn us, assessment should not subvert the learning that takes place during writing. A traditional essay exam does just that to a student who has learned that thinking, writing, and knowledge are closely intertwined.

Perhaps one reason we have not moved beyond the single-sitting impromptu essay exam more quickly is that researchers have raised serious concerns about the process of large-scale direct assessment of even single examples of student writing. "Objective" tests tried to remove the sense of any human agency from the assessment end of such testing and to limit "communication" between student and evaluator. With the shift to direct assessment and the subjectivity of qualitative assessment measures, the interrelatedness of writer and reader became painfully clear, and a host of new questions and concerns arose, most dealing with reliability. Given the concerns about the evaluation of individual essays, the idea of portfolio assessment would appear to multiply the difficulty of achieving reliability. The increased validity achieved from using multiple samples of writing from each student, however, has made portfolio assessment attractive. Brian Huot (1990b) predicts that the writing assessment community will soon move, as Miami has already, toward portfolio assessment. Citing White (1989), he asserts that problems in portfolio assessment are no greater than any difficulties experienced within the last two decades in establishing the direct measures of assessment we use now. In fact, it is our experience at Miami that a writing portfolio, holistically scored, does not multiply the difficulties

of holistically assessing single samples of writing; rather, it not only solves many of those problems but also provides students the opportunity to learn in the process of preparing their portfolios.

Addressing Concerns, Solving Problems

The portfolio guidelines created for entering Miami students stipulate four pieces—a reflective letter, a narrative or descriptive piece, an explanatory or exploratory or persuasive essay, and a response to a written text—totaling no more than twelve double-spaced typewritten pages (see Appendix A). The variety of pieces required in Miami's portfolio and the guidelines for its presentation address a number of concerns which have been advanced: researchers have questioned whether samples of writing with different aims of discourse should be or can be compared, and they are bothered by the role that appearance and length of the writing seem to play in evaluation.

When students have the opportunity to revise, edit, and type their papers for inclusion in a portfolio, the problems of appearance, essay length, and errors which occur in testing situations where handwritten responses are generated in a severely limited period of time are avoided. Typing eliminates the possibility of poor handwriting influencing a reader's score, and with time to proofread, most errors are located and corrected. Length is determined not by what a student can write within set time limits but, if anything, by page limitations.

Of greater concern to researchers is the comparison of different kinds of writing. Huot (1990a,b) cites a number of studies exploring the effect of discourse mode on performance and scores. Hoetker (1982), Quellmalz, Capell and Chou (1982), and White (1986) all found differences in the levels of performance depending upon the aim of the writing. There is no reason to believe, therefore, that the ability to write successfully in one mode predicts the ability to write successfully in any other.

These concerns become irrelevant when a portfolio consists of papers written in several different modes and the entire portfolio is scored holistically. If there is a limit on the total number of pages allowed in a portfolio but not on individual pieces, then a student can make choices which reflect the demands of a particular mode, the student's relative strength in each

mode, and the student's knowledge. A descriptive narrative may for one student be two pages and her explanatory essay five; for another, the textual analysis may be the most important and lengthy piece included. In such a case, weaknesses revealed in one mode may be balanced by strengths demonstrated in another. No longer are those responsible for assessment forced to guess whether a student's competency in a narrative predicts competence in a persuasive essay. McColly's (1970) concern, that readers may be responding to a student's demonstrated knowledge of a topic rather than to actual writing ability, is addressed by leaving topics open within the modes specified for the portfolio. This latitude allows students to write within the range of their experience and knowledge. Whole portfolios may then be fairly compared.

Comparing portfolios in a large-scale assessment approaches the kind of reading many teachers do in their classrooms. Certainly, whenever we read essays over the course of a semester, we begin to build up in our heads a composite of each student's work; we compare this last essay with the one that came before, and we try in some ways to anticipate the next. Thus, portfolio assessment addresses Davida Charney's (1984) concerns that the peer pressure typically part of the calibration process (Cooper, 1977; Coffman, 1971), the speed of the readings (McColly, 1970; Myers, 1980) and the extended length of reading time necessary for large-scale direct assessment combine to create "a very unnatural reading environment, one which intentionally disallows thoughtful responses to the essays" (204). For a high school teacher who reads hundreds of papers each week and must also comment on them, reading half that amount in the company of colleagues might not seem that unnatural. For a college instructor who tends to deal with writing as a whole—reading the whole corpus of a writer's work, for example, to get a feel for what she has produced over time—and especially for an instructor who uses a process approach to teaching, reading whole portfolios of student work may be much more natural than reading the hurried response to an exam prompt.

Certainly, the suggestion that an evaluation environment encourages "thoughtless response" seems far too harsh. Merely because response does not appear in the margins of each portfolio does not mean that it has not occurred. The exchanges during a calibration session are proof that readers give a great deal of thought to the scores they assign. It might be better argued that if thoughtless responses do occur, they are in response to the kind of thoughtless writing that is too frequently the result of a writing situation like an assigned essay question where the student has

no time to prepare and little time to think, to revise, or to write. As Andrea Lunsford asks, "What could be more solitary and agonized than students hunched at their desks trying to respond to a topic about which they know little and care even less?" (9). And when raters read countless responses to a topic they may care little about, scoring can also become a solitary and agonized activity. However, in reading work a student cares about, personalized by a reflective letter, evaluation once again becomes personal.

Portfolios as Ways of Learning

Creating a portfolio forces students to make a number of choices. Students are likely to have on hand several responses to a text, a variety of narratives, and probably a research paper of some sort. When students choose which papers to include in their portfolio, learning occurs. In an essay exam, by contrast, there is no time to choose and little time even to "revise"; what occurs is mostly simple editing, not a re-seeing of the text. And there is no time for considered self-evaluation. But time is necessary for reflection. Many students indicated in their letters that rereading their work in preparation for creating a portfolio made them aware of how their writing skills had changed over time, how they had improved. Such awareness of change reinforces the idea of writing as a process and encourages revision. The draft material submitted by students participating in Miami's portfolio program often demonstrates major revisions. Some students reduced their papers by half the original length to include them for our review, and so made critical decisions in reshaping their material. In revising, students realized that assessment criteria change from one context to another. Several wrote they realized that what was appropriate for high school might not be acceptable for college. Others made explicit in their reflective letter that they had chosen the pieces that were <u>their</u> favorites, not their teacher's. It is this ability to evaluate their own writing that Peter Elbow urges us to help our students achieve, for in this way they will become our writing colleagues, not remain always our writing students. One portfolio rater commented that students had sometimes not made the best choices, but concluded that making such choices at all is "a part of the learning experience."

Our final stipulation in the instruction for the reflective letter—"your letter should give readers a clearer understanding of who you are as a writer and as a person"—assumes implicitly

that the student will reach a clearer understanding of herself as writer through composing the letter. In interviews, students told us that this is exactly what occurred. One said, "The letter to the English professors really made me think of all the writing I've done. I've always really enjoyed writing, but to put it down in words, I guess I've never done [that]." This stipulation also underscores the importance of writing as a social act; once she has reached this understanding, she must communicate it to an audience. The best portfolios acknowledge the multiple roles of the program's participants—as writers, readers, students, teachers, evaluators, and learners.

Writing papers for a portfolio allows a student to demonstrate the rhetorical strategies she will be expected to use in Miami's composition class, a course which requires extended pieces of writing rather than brief, timed essays on unannounced topics. The opportunity to write a portfolio over a period of time allows students to make full use of all the skills they have learned in the process classroom. They may brainstorm, draft, listen to the comments of peers and teachers, brainstorm again, revise, and edit until the paper is complete. The final product, then, allows evaluators to see what a student given ample time is capable of doing, just as in a classroom using a portfolio approach we may see a paper in many forms and may substitute evaluation and support for "grading" until the end of the semester.

Miami's composition instructors who participated in both portfolio and proficiency scoring sessions unanimously felt more comfortable with their scores for the portfolios, which contained work more closely approximating that done in their own classes. Their narrative comments on a survey administered following a scoring session indicated that reading portfolios had been a learning experience for them as well as for the students who created the portfolios. They felt they had a better sense of where their first-year students would be beginning. One wrote,

> I have a much better sense of the immediate state and needs of my students this year (not last year or two years ago) and their concerns, writing background, etc., so it gives me a nice introduction to where they stand and how my class should bend earlier in the year.

Another wrote,

> I feel like I've 'been in class' after reading all these—like I've been in a series of high school classes and learned what's important to these students in their lives and what's important to their teachers in their English classes.

Summary

Miami's implementation of a portfolio writing program unifies assessment and instruction, long separated from one another. It reflects a model of learning which, as Edward White points out, is humanistic, and which rejects reductionism in its recognition that the whole is more than the sum of its parts (1985, 18). Creating a portfolio promotes collaboration and interaction between a writer and her peers and teachers; it allows a writer to make a statement, by choosing her own topics, about what she values in the world. It is her thoughtful response, in some ways, to the implicit statement we have made in choosing portfolio assessment—that we are an audience of willing readers. We are willing to take the extra time to gain a sense of the student as a writer; we are willing to accept their choice of topics, their decisions on the importance of each paper; and we are willing to validate all of their skills as writers.

Chapter Two

Contents of Portfolios

The first step in implementing a portfolio assessment program is to determine its goals and uses, to decide what the portfolio is to measure. The contents can then be defined by answering questions such as how many pieces of writing will be required? what kinds of pieces? what limitations, if any, on length? For placement purposes, it makes good sense to measure students' ability to produce the sort of writing required by the course(s) in which they may be placed or from which they may gain exemption. For placement in the appropriate-level course in argumentative writing, to take an obvious example, all portfolio pieces might well be argumentative. But for placement in a multi-genre two-semester sequence in composition and literature (the situation at Miami), the portfolio might include a variety of written work that approximates the composing tasks of both courses.

Multiple Samples

A portfolio with multiple pieces will help ensure fairness of assessment. Edward White argues that using multiple writing samples provides an inherently superior approach to measuring writing ability, noting that "if we use only one kind of topic, we will be disadvantaging those students who perform better in another mode and favoring those who do best in the one mode we test" (118). His concern with multiple samples also implies that these samples should require—unless a course is narrowly focused on, say, exposition—that students perform in several modes in the interests of fairness; indeed, researchers have warned against basing judgments of a student's writing ability on a single writing sample, discourse mode, or form (Quallmalz, Capell, and Chou, 1982; White and Polin, 1986).

Length and Number

Course requirements, rating costs, and student attitudes need to be considered in deciding on the number of portfolio pieces and the size of the portfolio. A two-course writing sequence would require more pieces than a one-term single-genre course. The more pieces in the portfolio, the longer it becomes and the more it costs to score. That is why an institution may want both to

specify the number of pieces (say 3, 4, or 5) and to limit total portfolio length—perhaps to 8, 10, 12, 15, or 20 typewritten pages. Unless a maximum is stipulated, some students will be sure to submit lengthy research papers. Thus the institution needs to balance pedagogical needs against potential costs. Student attitudes are also important in decisions about number and length. Especially in a voluntary placement program like Miami's, it is crucial that the portfolio seem "do-able" to students. A portfolio that requires six different compositions may intimidate even conscientious and talented high school writers during their busy senior year. Length limitations might also discourage student participation: a portfolio of four pieces limited to eight pages might seem too restrictive whereas a twenty-page limit might suggest that writers with less than twenty pages should not participate.

In a mandatory placement situation, length factors are still worth considering. Although a length limitation will not prevent students from participating, it may discourage them from giving the portfolio their most serious effort and they may not produce their best work.

The Contents of Miami's Portfolio

Each program needs to make decisions about the contents of its placement portfolio. At Miami, we chose to include several different kinds of writing, both to afford students a fairer chance to demonstrate their proficiency and to approximate more accurately our two-course composition sequence.

Here are the catalog descriptions of those two writing courses:

> English 111, College Composition. College Composition is a course focusing on writing as a process: discovering a subject, collecting information, focusing and ordering, revising and editing. Students often enter first year composition believing that there are certain forms and 'correct' ways to shape all writing, no matter the content, purpose, or intended audience. English 111 encourages students to devise different forms for different ideas, to revise and reshape as they discover new meanings in their writing. Further, each project will demand critical thinking about the material and form. This capacity to stand outside the subject, to see one's position in relation to other perspectives, is one of the central features of a liberal education. Students will develop facility with language as they learn how to adapt their writing to different purposes and audiences. By working in peer groups where they read and critique the writing of their peers, they will experience the effect of their writing on others and will be able to revise in response to their suggestions. The course aims, then, to help

students both to communicate more effectively and to use writing to learn about themselves and their world. Since students best learn to write by writing, they will write at least seven papers each semester, as well as daily journals, out-of-class exercises, sentence-combining assignments, drafts and revisions.

English 112 is the second half of the required two-course sequence in composition for first year students. The goal is to continue the writing practices begun in English 111 and to focus this term on imaginative texts in a number of genres. The time spent in the course is equally divided between reading and writing. English 112 reopens the category of 'literature' to the critical processes of discussion and writing. As students talk and write about the readings in 112, they are encouraged to look skeptically at the arguments for literature as universal and timeless. Material in English 112 is not necessarily drawn from a single period or country. Instead, a juxtaposition of a variety of literary works raises the questions of changing aesthetic values through history and of cultural differences. Many teachers combine readings of traditional works with texts of popular culture, such as movies, popular song lyrics, and television. By reading and discussing a variety of texts, students will face issues of difference in interpretation based on gender, race, age, and other factors. Essays in 112 range from literary interpretations of readings and personal response essays to persuasive pieces concerning ethical and moral issues raised by the readings.

Working from these course descriptions, we concluded that a Miami portfolio needed to include several specific kinds of writing (see Appendix A). Since one of the central aims of ENG 111 is "to help students. . .use writing to learn about themselves and their world," we decided that it was appropriate for the portfolio to include a piece of expressive prose, either narration or description. But an equally important aim of ENG 111, as well as ENG 112, is to help students write transactional prose, so we agreed upon the inclusion of an explanatory essay. The course title of ENG 112—Composition and Literature—convinced us of the need for an essay of textual analysis or literary response. Finally, we decided upon a genre of writing often not required in first-year composition courses but one which we believed would be important both in scoring portfolios and in helping students understand that writing is a means of learning—a cover letter which introduces the student and reflects on the portfolio. Thus we arrived inductively at a four-item portfolio. The decision about number led to a decision about length: since most papers written in ENG 111 and 112 range from two to three pages (500 to 900 words), it made sense to limit student portfolios to 12 type-written, double-spaced pages.

But perhaps our most important decision was an agreement to review our choices annually. Each year, in response to changes in the course or profession, the contents of the portfolio may

also change. In fact, the introductory letter was redefined as a "reflective letter" after the first year of the program, and the explanatory piece has been modified into an explanatory or exploratory or persuasive essay. The portfolio program is flexible enough to adapt to changing institutional and pedagogical needs.

The First Required Piece: A Reflective Letter

The first piece is a reflective letter composed expressly for the portfolio. We chose the reflective letter for several important reasons. First, it enabled us to evaluate the student's most current work. Second, it encouraged students to think about the portfolio they had assembled and to share those thoughts with us, an experience we thought would be instructive and educational for both writers and readers. Third, the reflective letter allowed students to create a context for their writing and in this way helped raters to read and score their portfolio more effectively. Fourth, a letter addressed to a specific audience (writing teachers at Miami University) related to a central requirement of ENG 111, writing for a variety of audiences. Of course, reflective writing may take forms other than a letter: one possibility is a preface, and another is the annotated table of contents used by the English Composition Board at University of Michigan.

We described the reflective letter as follows:

> This letter, addressed to Miami University writing teachers, introduces you and your portfolio. It may describe the process used in creating any one portfolio piece, discuss important choices in creating the portfolio, explain the place of writing in your life, or use a combination of these approaches. The letter should provide readers with a clearer understanding of who you are as a writer and as a person.

Above all, the reflective letter is designed to encourage students to engage in a meta-cognitive discussion of their writing. Since the composition course sequence stresses the composing process, at least one of the pieces of writing in the portfolio needed to stimulate students to write about that composing process. The letter spells out several possible responses, but all involve the composing process: either explicitly by asking the student to describe how one of the pieces was composed or to examine the choices made in assembling the portfolio, or to assess the portfolio's strengths and weaknesses; or implicitly by asking how the student has developed as a wrtier or

how writing fits into the student's life. The assignment requires reflection on either the completed writing or how it has come about.

The reflective letter also affords students an opportunity to write in a more personal, informal mode, a kind of writing valued in Miami's ENG 111-112 composition sequence in a number of ways, including the use of personal journals. Brian Huot (1990) maintains that students taking timed-essay examinations are reluctant to write to a more intimate audience even when invited. He concludes, "We should be aware that the testing activity within an academic context implicitly calls for text from the written end of the language continuum, thus providing students with an audience above and beyond that which might be otherwise specified in the writing prompt." But because the "testing activity" of the portfolio is so clearly unlike the familiar test situation—an institutional setting monitored by faculty—we hoped students would feel comfortable enough to move closer to what Huot calls the "speaking end of the language continuum." The letter format assists in that movement.

Some form of reflective writing seems essential for a placement portfolio. Many students select only previously finished writing; many others will include pieces newly revised. But since the deadline falls at graduation time (see Appendix B), few might include new writing. By asking for a new piece of writing, we hope the reflective letter will serve as closure for the process of assembling the portfolio. As the students reach that sense of closure, they should be learning something about their portfolio, about their writing, and perhaps about themselves. The final stipulation in the instructions—"the letter should provide readers with a clearer understanding of who you are as a writer and as a person"—emphasizes that the letter is to be a learning experience for readers. But the implication is that writing the reflective letter should be a learning experience for student-writers as well.

Two Reflective Letters

The value of reflective writing in helping raters evaluate student writing becomes clear through an examination of two letters:

Letter #1

Dear Readers,

I have always taken advanced English courses with a few extras like journalism and creative writing thrown in. I suppose I understand about as much about composition as any other student at this point in her career. I've got the five paragraph essay down like rain. I know not to tell but to show, and I know how to scatter my adjectives evenly.

What I am beginning to learn is that all of that is meaningless without my voice. If the author doesn't speak, then the words are just words, and they will lie there on paper forever.

My greatest writing vice is fragments–I adore them–you'll see. Perhaps I could write topic, major, minor, minor, major, minor, minor, major, minor, minor, conclusion. but if I did all that and I still didn't let you see the beauty of the child I was describing, the words are rubbish. I'm trying to temper my fragments, but I need them; I won't trash them for good.

My first piece, "Katie's Time," was hard to begin. Katie's death slapped me and the scar was deeper than I thought. It took a long time for me to be able to really think it through. I spent pages of journal writing trying to come up with my big life-meaning paper. When I finally began it with the simple truth that Katie was dead, everything came out. It was a healing paper.

Lately, I notice so many of my classmates writing about life and meaning and religion. We are all so alive and aware and curious and yet wise. We know so little, but we want to know, and that is enough. These are my life-papers. Each one taught me something as it left my pencil; I will try not to forget.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth

In her letter, Elizabeth focuses most intensely on explaining the place of writing in her life. Readers of her letter were initially impressed with her salutation—"Dear Readers"—which gracefully solves the sticky problem of how to get the letter started. But "Dear Readers" is also revealing about Elizabeth as a writer, for it says clearly that she knows she will be read and that she is conscious of her audience, an obvious fact of writing but one not always familiar to first-year students. Although Elizabeth's thumbnail sketch of her academic writing experiences in paragraph one suggests a fairly standard sort of training, her language itself depicts a mature writer able to view her own experience with ironic detachment as evidenced by her playing with phrases like "down like rain" and "scatter my adjectives evenly." Her discussion also effectively creates a

context for the three pieces that follow.

It is in paragraph 2 that Elizabeth's letter begins to reflect insightfully on the place of writing in her life. She has learned more than she has been taught; she has become a student capable of learning on her own. In paragraph 3, she continues to demonstrate how much she has learned on her own: she diagnoses her greatest "writing vice" in English teacherly terms, and she mildly mocks some of the formulas she has been taught. But her conclusion is to assert the lessons she has learned on her own about her writing, and she states her own agenda as a writer.

Even in her account of the writing of "Katie's Time," Elizabeth's sense of the value of writing in her life is clear. When she describes the essay as a "healing paper," she suggests the therapeutic role that writing plays for her. Clearly, she finds writing a valuable and valued activity. Her concluding paragraph continues to reflect upon writing and her life. She never tells her readers, "Writing is important to me." Instead, she shows its importance. Writing can teach her; it can heal her—no wonder she is determined to remember what she has written. Actually, her final sentence not only describes the value of the specific pieces of writing that she has completed, all worth remembering for various reasons, but it also describes writing itself, an activity that can heal and that can teach, an activity to remember and to care about. Elizabeth's letter provides her readers with a clear understanding of her as a writer.

Letter #2 is a less successful letter, but it is equally revealing about its student author.

Letter #2

Dear Sir or Madam,

During my high school years, I've worked to improve my writing. Now, I do alot more thinking and prewriting before I start to compose a draft. I usually have people proofread my papers to check for punctuation and minor mechanical errors.

I realize at times a writer will have to search for information. In creating the Loch Ness Monster paper, I decided I wanted a topic that would be interesting and unique. First, I went to the public and school library to investigate the available information. Secondly, I put the information on notecards to establish a sense of order. Thirdly, after placing the notecards in order, I constructed an outline. With cards in sequence, I began prewriting, revising, and proofreading. Finally, I typed the paper.

Reading the play, Oedipus Rex, in my Advanced Placement class, I selected to write a paper analyzing how blindness was used to represent sight. In writing Caribbean, I described a day at the beach which I experienced on a family vacation. Because I had an interest in the legendary monster from Loch Ness, I

decided to research more about the monster and ended up both writing and delivering a speech about the creature.

Lastly, I would like to thank Miami University's English Department for giving me the opportunity to submit my papers. I think that this opportunity for students to submit works for review and possible advance placement in their English curriculum is a wonderful idea.

Sincerely,

Nicole

Although Nicole's writing is competent, it does not show evidence of the same kind of reflection as Elizabeth's. From her salutation through her final paragraph, Nicole writes a rather formulaic letter with a straightforward narrative of how she wrote each paper. She is clear in relating her steps in putting together her research paper on the Loch Ness Monster, but her description sounds much like one she probably received from her teacher. The central processes of prewriting, revising, and proofreading are all collapsed into a single sentence with no elaboration of how those stages occurred or what Nicole actually did as she pre-wrote or revised. The Loch Ness paper clearly matters more to Nicole than the other two papers—after the letter moves on to a discussion of her other two portfolio pieces it returns to the Loch Ness piece at the end of the next paragraph—but she does not seem to realize its importance.

Although the letter is weakened by minor errors, possibly the result of poor proofreading, and by a standard introduction and conclusion, it nevertheless shows that Nicole has thought about the significance of the portfolio. But it also shows that she has failed to recognize some important elements of her own writing, including the reasons why the Loch Ness Monster paper mattered more than the others. Moreover, she seems to write in mechanical rather than organic ways, and she expresses no sense of the value of writing, other than to earn college credit. If the remainder of Nicole's portfolio were written at this level, it is safe to say that it would score lower than Elizabeth's, assuming *her* letter also to be representative. Based on their letters, Nicole has more growing to do as a writer than Elizabeth; thus the letters become a valuable tool for placing the two students in the proper composition course.

The Second Piece: The Story or Description

According to our written instructions,

> This narrative or descriptive piece should be based upon your own experience. Its aim is to communicate a significant experience rather than to explain it. Your writing will most likely be personal and informal. A short story is acceptable.

The instructions attempt to move students in the direction of a personal and expressive piece of work by stipulating that it be "based upon the student's own experience." The narratives we received ranged from one student's experiences as a Congressional aide in Washington to another's epiphany about her own independence after becoming separated from a youth travel group in Greece. Not all of the pieces were first-person, however; since short stories were clearly acceptable, a number of writers wrote fiction, ranging from fanciful sci fi genre pieces to a moving third-person narrative about a newly widowed woman's inability to reintegrate her life. In other words, students interpreted the phrase "based upon the student's own experience" in a wide sense, occasionally fictionalizing that experience in subtle ways.

The Third Piece: Explanatory, Exploratory, or Persuasive Essay

According to our instructions, the third piece is now described as "an explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay. It may be formal or informal in style, but it should have a strong focus and a clear central idea or direction. The aim of both an explanatory and exploratory essay is to be informative and enlightening, but an explanatory essay answers questions whereas an exploratory essay raises them. The aim of a persuasive paper is to be convincing, to change the reader's mind or heart or both. A paper that explains a physical process—a "how-to" paper—is not appropriate. Neither is a research paper that merely assembles information from other sources and is not based on the student's own ideas. You may have been begun this essay in a high school course other than English."

In our instructions we attempt to alert students to several pitfalls of an explanatory essay assignment. Because a paper that explains how a carburetor works or how lightning is formed risks being either too technical or too lifeless to make a positive impression on readers, we

stipulated that such topics would be inappropriate. But dealing with the research paper proved to be a stickier issue. Many high school English classes devote considerable time to writing research papers, and many students, we sensed, would be tempted to include a short research paper as their explanatory essay.

The development of Miami's composition sequence over the past two decades has reflected the profession's movement away from the trite, over-documented, cut-and-paste artificiality of many student research papers. Of course, our objections to the research paper are not so much directed at the idea of writing based upon outside sources as at the way such writing is characteristically taught. At the same time, we recognize that Ken McCrorie's "I-Search" paper offers a vital alternative to the dry research paper of the past and that mature student writers have always been able to incorporate their reading and research into their writing in productive ways. Although we considered a blanket prohibition against research papers, we finally settled for warning students about the inappropriateness of a research paper that "merely assembles information from other sources and is not based on the student's own ideas."

Since ENG 111 asks students to write in a number of different forms for a number of different audiences, the third essay invites students to use materials from outside their English classroom: "This essay may have been begun in a high school course other than English." With an essay from a history or physics course, students can demonstrate their capacity for addressing an audience other English teachers. Equally important, we hope that our description of this essay encourages high school teachers in all disciplines to make writing assignments standard in their courses.

The essays we received covered a wide range of subjects. One student writer explained the motivational power of fear while another explored the significance of running shoes to the social pecking order in his high school. Students wrote about the historical impact of fashion on the lives of women, the significance of the concept of "home," and the meaning of a close friend's death. Several students successfully used research to make their points; one essay argued that the media had abused its constitutionally protected rights in recent election coverage. That particular piece, along with a number of others, pushed the limits of the explanatory essay, encouraging us to broaden our original our original stipulation of an "explanatory essay" to an "explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay."

The Fourth Required Piece: Response to a Written Text

The fourth portfolio piece is a response to a written text, a form of writing emphasized in English 112. The instructions read as follows:

> This essay should respond to a short story, novel, poem, play, or piece of non-fiction prose written by a professional, a classmate, or yourself. It may interpret all or part of the text, evaluate it, show how it works, explain its significance, compare it to other texts, relate it to personal experience and values, or combine these approaches. Even if some secondary sources are used, readers should come away with a strong sense of your own response to the text. (If the text is not commonly known, a copy of it should be included in the portfolio.)

We define a number of possible texts—short story, novel, poem, play, non-fiction prose—but deliberately exclude advertisements, films, and other examples of visual art. Because the ENG 112 course description equally emphasizes reading and writing, we decided that the response essay should be based on reading a written text rather than viewing a film or watching a television program.

Since the course description also stipulates that the assigned literature is "not necessarily drawn from a single period or country," our instructions give students wide latitude in text selection, allowing them to choose for analysis a text written by a professional, a classmate, or even the students themselves. Again, we address the issue of the research paper. Our phrasing ("Even if some secondary sources are used...") was an attempt to suggest, however subtly, that we are not soliciting research papers. What we want is that students confront the texts themselves, not merely records the observations of more experienced readers. We encourage a personal interaction between student and text unmediated by literary criticism.

The students analyzed many traditional texts, from Shakespeare to the present: *Romeo and Juliet*, "Tintern Abbey," *Wuthering Heights*, *The Scarlet Letter*, "Dover Beach," *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Stranger*, and *The Lord of the Flies*. But there were a number of less predictable choices including Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* and Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* . One student analyzed an article in *U.S. News and World Report* on an endangered species of elephant, and another interpreted "The Parable of the Laborers" from the book of Matthew in the Bible. Other interesting choices

included a four-line poem in translation by a Spanish poet and a lyric titled "Three Babies" by the Irish singer Sinead O'Connor. One student offered a response to an I-search she herself had written, taking up our offer to analyze a piece of her own writing.

Summary

Placement portfolios need to be defined within the context of the writing program of which they are a part. By examining the course descriptions, program administrators can begin to develop a portfolio that asks students to produce the kinds of writing required by the courses into which they will be placed. Decisions about the genres of writing, the number of required pieces, and length are significant ones, influenced by pedagogical needs, economics, and student attitudes toward the required task. But we strongly recommend the inclusion of a reflective essay on the completed portfolio: it gives students an important learning opportunity, in part by offering a sense of closure to their writing experience. It also allows students to create a context for their other pieces while it gives raters metacognitive observations that are useful in the evaluation process.

Chapter Three

Implementing a Portfolio Placement Program

A Collaborative Effort

A portfolio assessment program must of necessity be a collaborative effort, involving not only the English Department but also the bursar's office, the admissions office, and the registrar. Local high school English teachers can also provide needed assistance.

Publicizing the Program

Once the contents of the portfolio have been determined, the next step in implementing the program is to create an effective recruiting procedure. Since significant effort and time are required to produce a portfolio, students must be informed about the program well in advance of deadlines. The need to inform students and recruit their participation is all the more intense if the program, like Miami's, is an optional one. Miami's program focuses on upper-end placement, identifying more accomplished writers and either exempting them from the composition sequence altogether or placing them in an advanced class.

In a lower-end program which places less accomplished writers in developmental or tutorial courses, it seems more likely that students would be required to submit a portfolio. But whether optional or required, the portfolio program needs to be publicized so that students can effectively participate in it.

The Admissions Office and Its Role

The first step in publicizing the placement program is to identify the participating population. If all incoming students will be required or invited to submit a portfolio, information must be mailed to all those who accept admission to the institution. But since admission decisions are sometimes not made until March or April, and since acceptances are received even later, the program will probably need to be publicized more widely at high schools that traditionally send students to the institution. The value of such publicity is twofold: it gives students and teachers an

early start on portfolio preparation, and it enables prospective applicants to take into account the opportunity, or requirement, to participate in portfolio assessment. In any case, the admissions office is essential for providing names and mailing addresses.

One Approach to Publicity: The Teachers' Brochure

Our admissions office identified some 1400 high schools with a record of sending graduates to Miami. These "feeder high schools" were the first target for our publicity—a modest brochure describing the portfolio program. This brochure, printed in two colors on 11 x 14" paper and then folded twice to create eight panels, is addressed not to students but to their teachers. The front panel reads "PORTFOLIO WRITING PROGRAM: For Students Entering Miami University in 1992."

Panel two explains why Miami has chosen to use portfolios for placement and then addresses the teachers directly. After all, the central purpose of the brochure is to alert high school English teachers to our placement program in the hopes that they advise their students to think about and work on their portfolios throughout their senior year.

> AN INVITATION. Miami University's Department of English invites students who plan to attend Miami next fall to participate in its Portfolio Writing Program. The portfolio program awards college credit and advanced placement to entering students who write well. WHY A PORTFOLIO? A portfolio is a collection of written work selected by the student and put together as an artist might assemble a group of her or his best paintings. Within certain limits (see Portfolio Contents), students choose their own topics and are free to revise their work as much or as little as they like. The process of creating a portfolio closely resembles the kind of writing done in Miami's first-year writing classes. HOW TEACHERS CAN HELP. Please encourage your students planning to attend Miami to submit a portfolio of their best writing. Your encouragement might take the form of sharing this brochure with them, of sending for a free copy of 'The Best of Miami's Portfolios' to share, or of using portfolios in your own classroom. This brochure contains all the information and material needed to create and submit a portfolio. But a personal invitation together with the guidelines included here will be sent to applicants in early 1993.

The third panel of the brochure explains Miami's placement procedures:

> CREDIT AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT. Students whose portfolio is rated very good or excellent receive six credits toward graduation and

completely fulfill the university writing requirement. Students whose portfolio is rated good earn three credits toward graduation, partially fulfill their writing requirement, and receive advanced placement in English 113 (Advanced College Composition).

	Credits Granted	Required Courses
Very good to excellent portfolio	6	none
Good portfolio	3	ENG 113
Fair or poor portfolio	0	ENG 111 & 112

LAST YEAR'S BEST PORTFOLIOS. For a free copy of the publication *The Best of Miami's Portfolios*, which features outstanding portfolios of student writing from last year, please write to PORTFOLIO, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056. (513) 529-5221.

Publishing the previous year's best work is an excellent recruiting tool because it gives teachers and students alike concrete examples of the kind of portfolios that earned high scores. For *The Best of Miami University's Portfolios 1992*, we selected seven full portfolios: each is introduced by a brief autobiographical note written by the student, and each is followed by comments from the raters explaining why they rated the portfolio as outstanding. The booklet also includes selections from seven additional portfolios, as well as a description of the portfolio contents and guidelines. We produced the text ourselves with desktop publishing software, photocopied it, and then bound it with a process called thermal binding, performed by the copying machine itself. The final result was a 120-page booklet that cost approximately $3.00 per copy. The cost of producing the booklet is covered by the testing fees, discussed below, but we will charge for copies once our modest initial printing is exhausted.

Explaining the Contents and Guidelines

The remaining panels of the brochure describe the contents of the portfolio (already discussed in Chapter 2) and then the guidelines for submission (see Appendix B). We developed the guidelines in consultation with local high school English teachers. They read a draft of the brochure and alerted us to ambiguities and confusing passages which we subsequently revised.

Finding such teachers can be tricky. We located them through the Ohio Writing Project (OWP), a Miami-based affiliate of the National Writing Project which offers in-service training for elementary and secondary writing teachers. The OWP identified a half-dozen exceptionally well-qualified teachers who agreed to serve as portfolio consultants. Contacting the nearest National Writing Project affiliate will probably provide a suitable number of consultants. If funding is available, a modest honorarium can induce them to spend an afternoon on campus discussing the brochure materials with program administrators.

The guidelines for submission read as follows:

1. All materials must be mailed on or before June 1, 1993 by your supervising teacher—the English teacher most familiar with the pieces in your portfolio. The supervising teacher signs a form that, to the best of her or his knowledge, all writing in the portfolio is your own. You sign a similar statement.

2. Arrange your portfolio items in the following order: a) completed information form; b) reflective letter; c) story or description; d) explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay; and e) response to a written text.

3. Your written work–not counting the cover sheet and not counting the draft material requested in #4 below–should in no case exceed 12 typed, double-spaced pages (8.5 x 11").

4. For any one piece, include all your draft material (paper clipped at the end of the appropriate essay).

5. All items–except the draft material of item #4 above–must be free of teachers' comments, grades, and markings.

6. Do not write your name anywhere except on the information form, but do write your social security number in the upper right corner of every page. Pieces 2, 3, and 4 should have a title.

7. No staples should be used. The 5-item portfolio should be fastened with a paper clip.

8. Papers written in class or out of school, including college applications essays, are acceptable. Papers may be revised after being returned by a teacher.

9. You will be rewarded for originality and variety so long as you observe "Portfolio Contents."

10. Portfolio submission costs $21, but you will receive a $10 gift certificate

from Follett's Miami Coop Bookstore, and you will not be billed until the summer. Results will be available by mid-June—in time for registration at summer orientation.

These guidelines are worth closer examination. Clearly, in any portfolio assessment situation where the written work has been completed prior to the student's arrival on campus, security becomes an issue. Have the students indeed done their own writing? While it is probably impossible to police all plagiarism out of existence, we took several steps to control the security of the portfolios. The reflective letter itself, discussed in Chapter 2, is a piece composed expressly for the portfolio by the student and serves as one check on plagiarism.

Guidelines 1 and 2 provide two other checks. All portfolios require a completed information form (see Appendix C) which includes a signed statement by the student's high school English teacher attesting to the originality of the writing. We also request that one of the three major pieces be accompanied by the student's draft materials, another check on the originality of the work since such materials would not likely exist unless the student has written the piece herself.

Edward White has commented that "when testing becomes separated from teaching, both teaching and testing suffer. And when passing a test begins to seem unrelated to learning, we ask our students to become cynical about learning itself" (1985). By requiring draft materials, we emphasize that the process of revision is an integral part of producing the Miami portfolio, just as it is an integral part of our composition sequence. (Guideline #3 makes explicit the value we place on revision.) Since in many cases the students choose to explain the required multiple drafts in their reflective letter, this guideline offers the possibility of learning to the students, making the portfolio a more meaningful experience than a timed essay examination.

One of our major concerns, to be taken up in a later section of this booklet, is that scoring the portfolios be not only accurate but economical. Obviously, raters will require more time to read a portfolio than a single essay produced during a test situation; by requiring all of the work to be typewritten and by imposing a maximum page count (Guideline #3), we hoped to make the reading time manageable for our raters. Most portfolios fall into the 8-10 page range, although we have found an occasional portfolio that is too long for our raters to score (one was 24 pages long!).

Guidelines #5 and 6 are designed to minimize rater bias. Removing names and teacher

comments eliminate two sources of potential bias for raters trying to employ the community-derived standards of a holistic scoring session.

Guideline #9 is especially significant because it suggests to students that playing it safe, submitting conservative pieces of writing, may not result in the credit or advanced placement they seek. In Appendices F and G, two portfolios have been reproduced; the better one shows originality in interpreting the required genres as well as accomplishment in the writing itself.

Our student surveys of participants informed us very clearly that students want the portfolios to be scored as rapidly as possible and want to receive the results as soon as possible. Upon the advice of our high school teacher consultants, we set the due date as the first schoolday in June, a date that allows graduating seniors as much time as possible to complete the portfolio before the school year ends and their supervising teachers become harder to contact. We allow up to three weeks to process the portfolios and prepare for the holistic scoring session which takes place in mid-June when many of our colleagues are still in town and available to serve as raters. Guideline #10 notifies students of our timetable. It also makes clear the cost of the program, most of which is for the rating itself, about which more later in this section.

Two brochures are mailed in the late fall to each of the feeder high schools, one addressed "Senior English Teacher" and one addressed "Junior English Teacher." We also send brochures to every past supervising teacher, now a substantial list with the portfolio program entering its fourth year. Even in a required portfolio program, brochures are useful in publicizing and promoting the program.

Individual Notification of Students

The use of a brochure may not be appropriate or necessary if the portfolio program is carried out on a smaller scale than at Miami. However, the second part of the recruiting effort, contacting the students individually, is absolutely vital to the success of the program. Consultation with the admissions office is necessary in order to develop a mailing list of students. Students may be contacted at any of three points in the admission process: upon application, upon admission by the university, or upon acceptance by the student. The point of contact may have to be negotiated with the admissions office.

Miami contacts all admitted students who have been accepted because we want to give them as much time as possible to complete their portfolios; waiting for student acceptance to issue invitations would cut deeply into their time. Negotiating with the admissions office can reduce costs: if, as is Miami's practice, the admissions office sends a packet of materials to all accepted students, "piggybacking" the instructions letter as part of that packet can reduce mailing costs significantly, perhaps even eliminate them. In our case, these personal invitations go out to students in February or March. The letter (see Appendix D) accompanied by the guidelines, echo the information already contained in the brochure; however, only some of the students will have seen the brochure, making the invitation letter absolutely essential.

Processing Portfolios

Once the portfolios begin to arrive, they must be processed efficiently. Clerical staff is needed to assign each portfolio to its own manila folder, carefully separating the required draft materials from the typewritten portfolio pieces. The draft materials remain in the folder for reference but are not actually read by the raters during the scoring session. Information forms must be checked for completeness: full name and address; social security number; high school; supervising teacher's name, address, and signature. Portfolios lacking the supervising teacher's signature will not be scored. Once the cover sheet and draft materials have been detached, the portfolio must be paperclipped.

The staff must also check each portfolio to see if it has followed the stated guidelines: is it typed? does it exceed the length limit? does it include the correct number of separate pieces? Portfolios that fail to meet these guidelines are set aside to be dealt with by the program administrators (portfolios with too few pieces or with more than the maximum number of allowed pages will most likely be deemed unscorable; handwritten portfolios may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon length and readability.) The student's name and social security number need to be written on the manila folder and then entered onto a master list. The master list will assist the Chief Reader at the scoring session to keep track of the portfolios; it will also be sent to the Bursar's office for billing purposes. Our students are billed directly by the bursar, sparing us the need to handle money or checks. While partially funded by a FIPSE grant, we made a

photocopy of each portfolio for security and research purposes; when that funding lapses, we will have to consider whether spending time and money to copy the portfolios is justified.

Scoring the portfolios is a challenging and rewarding matter, one discussed in detail later in this booklet; however, the scoring itself can take one or two days depending upon the quantity of portfolios and readers. With the 450 portfolios we usually receive, we plan on a two-day scoring session. We notify the students of their results by late June when they begin to arrive for summer orientation. They have ample time to adjust their schedules if they have received partial or full credit for composition. The department also has almost two months to adjust its staffing needs in all the composition courses: English 111, 112, and 113. In the past, the placement examination was administered forty-eight hours before classes started, pressured and hasty scoring sessions lasted all day and into the night, and students often learned they had received advanced placement or credit when they walked into class on the first day. Scoring portfolios in June benefits the students, the department, and the program administrators.

The prohibitive cost of mailing all of the portfolios back to students mitigates against returning the portfolios. However, making the portfolios available to students who request them is a workable alternative. Students who come to the English Department's office during the school year are able to pick up their portfolios which we save until the following year's portfolios arrive and require all the file space we can find. After the scoring is complete in June, the program administrators sift through the portfolios, checking scores, and selecting portfolios to be published as *The Best of Miami University's Portfolios*. Content descriptions and guidelines are reviewed and revised in light of the experience of the past scoring sessions, and the cycle begins again for the following year.

Costs of a Portfolio Placement Program

Running a portfolio placement program is not inexpensive but the costs are well worth the dividends in faculty development, university public relations, improved composition instruction in high school, and—of course—heightened validity in writing assessment.

Although financial conditions will vary, each institution should be able to fund a portfolio

placement program through the use of student fees. At Miami, submitting a portfolio costs $21, the standard university fee for a departmental proficiency examination. Although the standard fee is far less than what the Educational Testing Service charges for its Advanced Placement (AP) examination, we have made our optional portfolio program even less costly—and more attractive—by awarding participating students a $10 discount coupon at a campus bookstore. Further negotiations with local establishments might make portfolio participation still more attractive.

Whether funding comes from students, the administration, or an outside agency, major costs will involve publicizing the program and scoring the portfolios. How much to spend for brochures, for invitational letters to students, for congratulatory letters to students, teachers, and principals, and for publishing outstanding work in a volume like *The Best of Miami University's Portfolios* will of course depend on budget size. But it may be possible to cut costs by incorporating portfolio material into admissions material, by charging for the published volume of student writing, and by enlisting private sponsorship of the program.

The scoring session is where costs cannot be reduced without severe risk. It is absolutely essential, we have learned from painful experience, that a representative team of raters spend between 15 and 20 hours with the chief reader in order to select the anchor portfolios to be used in the training sessions. Because this Anchor Selection Team needs first to read widely among the portfolios and then to meet and discuss two or three dozen prospective anchor portfolios, they will be spending two or three days at their task. Since Miami University pays its raters $15—Edward White rightly insists that a decent wage provides the sense of professionalism required to score effectively—the cost of anchor selection may run about $1500. Raters' costs for the training and scoring session itself will of course run higher. During Miami's last portfolio scoring session, which involved 35 raters scoring 464 portfolios in a two-day period, the total cost—including refreshments—came close to $8,000.

Summary

Advance planning is a prerequisite for the success of a portfolio placement program.

Decisions must be made about how best to inform students about the program; such decisions may need to be made in conjunction with the admissions office and the bursar's office at the institution. Procedures need to be developed to process incoming portfolios, including scoring them in an economical fashion. Provisions need to be made for charging students an appropriate sum to underwrite the program. Finally, decisions must be made about how and when to notify students of their placement and about what will be done with the portfolios after they have been scored.

Chapter Four

Rating Writing Portfolios

Rating writing portfolios for placement begins with a decision about what kind of scoring scale to employ. Two options exist: a fixed scale or a relative scale. We can illustrate a fixed scale by describing how it might work in our program. In Miami's portfolio assessment program, students' placement is contingent upon the number of credits awarded them. They may earn 6 credits, placing out of the program entirely; 3 credits, earning placement into an advanced composition course; or 0 credits, earning placement into the required composition sequence. Using a fixed scoring scale, the portfolios would be rated either 0, 3, or 6, with the score reflecting the number of actual credits earned. Thus the raters make decisions about placement and are aware of the consequences of their rating. We term this a "fixed scale" because each score has a fixed consequence tied to it.

A relative scoring scale, on the other hand, does not ask raters to think about consequences. [The best known relative scoring scale is the 1-9 scale used by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for its Advanced Placement (AP) program.] After all of the portfolios have been scored, the chief reader and scoring committee make decisions about which scores earn placement into which courses. The raters themselves, in other words, are not directly making decisions about placement; they do so indirectly by assigning value to each portfolio. The scores reflect the relative merits of the portfolios compared to one another; the consequences of a specific score may be different from one year to another.

The rest of this chapter will discuss the procedures for developing a relative scoring scale like that used at Miami. We have tried, with success, both a fixed scale and a relative scale. At the moment, we have decided upon a 6-point relative scale because it makes finer distinctions among the portfolios, permitting more flexibility in our final placement decisions (see Appendix E). Developing either scoring scale entails a similar process, however.

Steps in Developing a Scoring System

Developing a holistic scoring system for portfolios is no different from the process of developing any holistic scoring system (see Daiker and Grogan, 1990). The steps include

1. Selecting a scoring scale
2. Selecting anchor portfolios
3. Writing scoring guidelines
4. Planning the calibration session
5. Conducting the calibration session
6. Scoring the portfolios

While these procedures will be familiar to those with holistic scoring experience, portfolio scoring changes some of the steps and raises new issues as well. The rest of this chapter will move through the five steps outlined, focusing most closely on the unique difficulties and issues raised by portfolio scoring.

Selecting Anchor Portfolios

As Daiker and Grogan (1991) suggest, the rating committee should read a number of portfolios before assigning scores as a means of familiarizing itself with the range of writing in the portfolios. In doing so, the committee will most likely discover that reading portfolios is different from reading single essays. The differences will lead to crucial decision-making.

Because portfolios are longer than the individual essays that most faculty have rated in holistic scoring sessions and consist of several pieces of writing, reading "holistically" needs to be redefined. Just as rating an essay holistically does not mean assigning a score to each paragraph in the piece and averaging those scores to arrive at a final score, so reading a portfolio holistically ought not mean assigning scores to each piece and then averaging them to determine a final rating. The demands upon readers are therefore greater because they must learn to hold their judgment in

abeyance not only over the course of a single essay but over the course of an entire portfolio. With practice, raters can learn to do this kind of reading. They must do so because the impulse to rate each piece is quite counter-productive. For example, in a portfolio of four pieces, a rater who assigns scores of 6 to the first two pieces is not only no longer reading holistically but is also likely to be tempted to score the portfolio as a 6 based only on the first two pieces. This premature assessment subverts the entire point of using portfolios in the first place.

The scoring guidelines can be used to address both of these problems. In the general directions, raters should be reminded not to score individual pieces but rather to withhold judgment until reading all of the written work. We at Miami debated whether or not to provide raters with pads for notetaking. The argument in favor is that raters might need help in remembering what they have read since each portfolio has many pages and multiple pieces. The argument opposed is that the pad might not only slow readers down but also encourage them to keep separate scores on individual pieces. We finally decided not to provide pads, but we did not specifically prohibit note-taking.

Additionally, a criterion that rewards writers for their ability to compose a variety of pieces addresses the problem of premature judgment. In other words, the writers who compose four pieces that are in some significant way different from one another will score higher than the writers who stick to one genre or one voice throughout their portfolios. For raters to make such judgments, they must read the entire portfolio.

While familiarizing themselves with the portfolios, the rating committee will encounter the "roller coaster" effect and the "glow" effect. The "roller coaster" effect occurs when the pieces in a portfolio fluctuate dramatically in quality, and although our experience has been that this effect is not nearly as widespread as we feared, it nonetheless does occur. The fact that some portfolios do have their ups and downs is another argument for holistic reading. Raters who make their decision too soon may miss the other half of the roller coaster ride that would affect their final rating. Sometimes the roller coaster ride provided by a portfolio proves problematic for raters. Certainly some wildly uneven essays prove troublesome in holistic scoring, but the portfolio approach is more likely to supply uneven work since more writing and more kinds of writing are required. The rating committee needs to be aware of the roller coaster effect, perhaps selecting as an anchor a

portfolio that demonstrates unevenness in accomplishment so that the problem can be addressed in the training session.

The "glow" effect, on the other hand, is more common. An exceptionally strong or exceptionally weak piece early in the portfolio tends to shed a glow (or a shadow) over the remainder of the portfolio that can affect the overall rating. For instance, one portfolio began with an introductory letter that ended with this paragraph: "Over the past few years, I've developed new attitudes toward writing, enjoying it rather than dreading it, and viewing each piece not as one completed but as a work-in-progress. There is always a more appropriate word (most often, the one that awakens me out of a sound sleep at 4 a.m. – the day after the deadline), a better phrase, room for improvement. I find this stimulating, not frustrating." Readers agreed that this letter was an excellent one; in fact, in separate scoring, as part of a research project, the letter by itself earned the top score of 6 from two different readers. However, this student's entire portfolio scored 5 from both of its raters in the portfolio rating session. That the rest of the portfolio dropped off in quality seems clear; how much did the strength of the letter help the portfolio's overall score? It's hard to know, but it's not hard to surmise that the very strong impression made by the opening letter must have influenced the raters positively.

Thus it is vital to stress to raters that they need to withhold judgment until the entire portfolio has been read. By reading the entire portfolio holistically before arriving at a score, raters can perhaps avoid being unduly affected by the glow given off by an exceptional piece. Certainly, the rater who is bowled over by the opening piece and who skims the remaining pieces is not doing the portfolio justice. A judicious choice of anchor portfolios can help the Chief Reader address the glow effect during the training session.

Because each piece in the portfolio can, and probably does, color the rater's view of the following pieces, the sequence of the pieces in the portfolio is significant. To be more precise, it is essential that the sequence of the pieces either be stipulated by the portfolio instructions given or that it be left up to the individual students. But the sequence should not be determined by the raters themselves. Each rater should be reading exactly the same portfolio as subsequent raters, so carelessness in handling the portfolios can lead to problems. Portfolios should either have all four pieces stapled together or its pages be numbered consecutively as a means of ensuring that the

sequence remains unchanged during multiple readings.

Another factor that affects the rating is the relative weighting given to the separate pieces in the portfolio. Miami participants were asked to submit four pieces totaling no more than twelve pages. However, they were not required to write four three-page pieces, and few students did so. Far more common was to see variation in length; in some cases, three two-page papers would be accompanied by one six-page paper. In selecting anchor portfolios, the rating committee must reach a decision about how raters should weight the component pieces in the portfolios. We settled upon an objective criterion: page length. The assumption we made was that a longer paper should count more in a rater's holistic score. This criterion is not entirely satisfactory, however. A brilliantly evocative but highly compressed description might run less than two pages and thus count for less than a longer analytical piece although it is possible that the student invested more time and effort in the shorter piece. The problem is that raters cannot know the background of each piece, so length seemed a suitable solution to the problem.

However, we did discover that some portfolios could be weighted on other criteria. Some students used the required reflective letter to provide a context for the remaining papers, and in the process indicated which piece or pieces mattered most to them. To return to the earlier example, the student whose description was the product of prodigious effort and to whom the final draft was a matter of great pride might have said so in the reflective letter, alerting raters that the descriptive piece deserved greater weighting in the final assessment of the portfolio.

The reflective writing itself also presents a new challenge to rating committees accustomed to the holistic scoring of single essays. Unlike the essay-scoring situation in which raters simply read the essays, portfolio-scoring situations provide raters with a meta-commentary by the student about the written work. While deciding what to reward in the reflective piece is not difficult, reading the letters is a new task and one for which the rating committee will need to be prepared.

There are two other potential difficulties connected with rating portfolios, one peculiar to the portfolio situation and one exacerbated by it. The rating committee will need to decide how to deal with an incomplete portfolio, one with fewer than four pieces. While it is certainly possible that an incomplete essay might be produced during a single-sitting essay examination, the situation does not occur often enough to be a major concern. Certainly, there should not be a major problem with

incomplete portfolios, but the likelihood of receiving incomplete portfolios increases when the requirements made of the students increase. The incomplete portfolio can either be deemed unscorable as a non-responsive essay would be, or it can be scored on the 1-6 scale with raters taking into account that the portfolio is incomplete. The Miami program chose to set aside incomplete portfolios, weeding them out during the preparation phase; these portfolios were never distributed to raters, and they received scores of 0, meaning "Not Rated."

Another potential problem exacerbated by the portfolio is caused by objectionable writing, writing that manifests sexist, racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, or other offensive points of view. Certainly, an occasional single-sitting essay on an assigned topic may contain an offensive passage of this nature, but since the portfolio is much longer and since it offers students greater freedom of choice in selecting the pieces, the likelihood of such writing occurring increases. How to handle such portfolios is problematic at best. No one wants to reward writing that displays repugnant attitudes, yet no one is eager to make judgments about the quality of the writing based on the writers' political views. It is important not to magnify this problem; it did not present a major obstacle to the rating. However, the rating committee should think through how it wishes to handle such situations if and when they arise.

Writing a Scoring Rubric

With anchor portfolios in hand, the rating committee will need to compose a scoring rubric, or scoring guidelines, that describe each of the possible scores. This process is substantially the same as developing scoring guidelines in an essay rating situation. However, because the essays are written in response to a specific prompt, the scoring guidelines can be fairly specific in their description of the features that define each score. The case is rather different with a portfolio.

Although the portfolios will all resemble one another in containing the same number of pieces and, most likely, the same variety of pieces, they will differ in their total length and, more significantly, in the actual pieces. While one portfolio may consist of the reflective letter, a narrative about the death of a close friend, an explanation of why rap music has become popular among white teens, and an analysis of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the next one may consist

of the reflective letter, a description of a campfire singalong in the Rockies, a persuasive essay arguing against the government's foreign policy, and a response to a friend's original song lyrics. The scoring guidelines need somehow to accommodate the wide range of acceptable pieces without becoming either too prescriptive or too vague. By necessity, the descriptions will tend toward the general with the variation from one score to another relying upon appropriately chosen verbs and adjectives. For example, the statement that an excellent portfolio "demonstrates" a specific feature distinguishes that portfolio from one that "suggests" that same feature

Composing the scoring guidelines requires time and care. In the first year of the Miami program, it required nine hours of meetings to select anchor portfolios; it required three hours alone to revise the one-page scoring rubric to the point where it seemed workable. After the revision, the committee returned to selecting more anchor portfolios using the guidelines themselves. That final session produced a much higher level of consensus. In fact, the three raters on the committee produced identical scores on six portfolios out of nine. On the other three portfolios, two raters agreed and the third rater was one point off on the six-point scale. This brief "field test" of the scoring guidelines took time but seemed essential. We have become more efficient in subsequent years, particularly in revising the scoring guidelines which do not change drastically from year to year.

Planning the Training Session

At this point in developing a holistic scoring assessment program, the committee is usually ready to rate the students' writing. Because rating portfolios was a new experience, however, the Miami program first scheduled a run-through or "mock" calibration session. The purpose of the session was to fine tune the scoring guidelines and to consult with experienced raters about the rating in an effort to see what we might have overlooked in our planning.

To assist us, we recruited approximately ten colleagues, all of whom had prior experience in holistic rating and most of whom would be participating as raters in our actual scoring session later on. The Chief Reader conducted the mock calibration session as he would the actual session on the day of the scoring. However, the mock session was an abbreviated version of a training

session since it was important to leave time to discuss the training itself.

We found it helpful to plan the sequence in which we used the anchor portfolios; it was useful to follow a "5" portfolio with a "2" portfolio, for instance, as a means of showing readers the difference between an upper half and a lower half portfolio. We followed with a "4," then a "6," a "3," and a "1."

The mock training session proved quite useful. We made adjustments in the rubric in response to the raters' comments. Issues such as how to deal with the roller coaster effect, how to read four pieces holistically, how to weight the different pieces in the portfolio, and how to deal with the reflective metacommentary were all discussed; the rating committee clarified its thinking about all of these issues.

The mock training session also permitted us to make some important decisions about how to conduct the actual training session. By observing carefully the process of calibration at the mock session, we determined that raters would need to practice on anywhere from 10-12 portfolios to reach a suitable level of calibration. By gauging the amount of time required for the group to read a portfolio, rate it, and discuss it, the committee determined that the training session itself needed to run five hours, a full morning and a portion of the afternoon, rather than the two hours or so required for essay rating calibration.

Although we had decided upon the number of anchors we could use for calibration, we still had to decide which anchors to use. If we only had time for ten anchors in our five-hour session, a possibility depending upon how talkative the group was, we determined that we would need at least two representing each of the scores of "3" to "6" and a total of two at the "1" and "2" level. Because the Miami program focuses on advanced placement and credit, the lower-end scores do not need to be clearly differentiated. Ultimately, no one scoring three or below would receive any advanced placement or credit, so the difference between a score of "1" and "2" was not significant. Thus, we did not need as many anchors at the lower level. The opposite would be true in a placement situation designed to locate students in need of developmental help; fewer anchors at the upper end of the scale would be needed than at the lower end.

The rating committee had also noticed that readers found rating the portfolios a bit disorienting at first since they had little idea of what to expect. We needed to address that problem

and decided to provide raters with two anchors to start the training. Since one portfolio was a "2" and one was a "5," the raters were able to determine relative strengths without any problem. Raters could fit subsequent anchors more comfortably into the range established by the first two. However, it is very challenging to ask raters to rate and discuss two portfolios at once because of the demands made upon their memories. After beginning with a pair of anchors, the Chief Reader asked raters to score only one portfolio at a time. This process worked effectively.

The Scoring Session

The actual scoring session for the portfolios is not markedly different from any holistic scoring session. Since the portfolios are likely to be more interesting than the single-sitting essays, raters may be tempted to read more slowly. They need to be informed of the pace that is expected of them. The scoring session needs to provide as much comfort as possible to the readers, even more so than in other holistic scoring situations. When reading brief essays taking no more than 2-3 minutes to rate, raters have plenty of opportunities to stretch, relax, and move about without losing their concentration. With portfolios, the raters must concentrate harder for longer periods of time, since it requires 7-8 minutes to rate a portfolio. Comfortable seats and hourly breaks become even more important under such circumstances. Each portfolio is rated twice with discrepant ratings, as defined by the scoring committee, triggering a third rating. The rating sessions, in our case, have taken 35 readers an afternoon and a full second day.

Summary

The process of rating writing portfolios resembles any large-scale holistic writing assessment, but it does differ in several significant ways. After it has been determined whether to use a fixed or a relative scoring scale, anchor portfolios must be selected. Raters must learn to read holistically, learning to deal with the "roller coaster" and "glow" effects demonstrated by some portfolios. Other issues include weighting the different pieces, dealing with the reflective piece, handling incomplete portfolios, and encountering problematic texts. The process continues

with the development of a scoring rubric and planning the training session. A mock training session can be helpful, and ample time needs to be allowed for training inexperienced portfolio raters. The actual scoring session differs from essay scoring sessions only in the longer time required to rate an individual portfolio.

Chapter Five

Portfolio Assessment and the Teaching of Writing

Miami's portfolio is defined by five significant characteristics.

1. Multiple samples of writing from a number of occasions
2. A variety of kinds or genres of writing
3. Opportunities for revision and evidence of the revision process
4. Student reflections—on their portfolio, on their writing process or history, or on themselves as writers
5. Important choices for the writer

Each of these five characteristics has strong implications for the teaching of writing.

Implications for Teaching

The requirement that Miami's portfolio contain several pieces of writing implies that no single writing sample can adequately measure writing ability—either for a course or for large-scale assessment. The related requirement that the writing be done on different occasions recognizes the truth that writers perform better on some days than on others. The implication here is that because changing physical and psychological factors affect performance, even multiple writing samples that are collected at the same time cannot adequately measure writing ability. In requiring samples written at different times, Miami's portfolio directly challenges the Advanced Placement (AP) program of the Educational Testing Service, which recommends levels of college placement based on its evaluations of three essays (and a multiple choice test) written at a single sitting.

The second characteristic of Miami's portfolio—that several different kinds of writing be included—reflects our belief that writing is a complex, multifaceted activity that cannot be appropriately represented by a single genre: not by exposition, not by argument, not by critical

analysis. This requirement implies both that writing competence varies from genre to genre and that schools should encourage different kinds of writing.

Portfolio assessment has become popular largely because standard testing programs deny opportunities for meaningful revision. The Miami portfolio program implies strong endorsement of the revision process. Indeed, our portfolio program openly encourages students to revise their work at various stages of the composing process, stipulating that "Papers revised after being returned by a teacher are acceptable." A further implication of endorsing revision is that writers are encouraged to take constructive criticism from their teachers—and classmates—more seriously, since they have the option of using that criticism in revising their work. The Miami portfolio invites collaborative work—between student and teacher as well as among students themselves, both in structured workshops and in less formal contexts—and implies that there is special educational value in collaboration and community. Finally, encouraging revision helps create an environment in which students are more likely to take risks and try exploratory writing. High school writing teacher Mike Stratton observed that in creating a portfolio for Miami his student Jeff Flory "wasn't afraid to discard entire drafts. . . . The more he revised, the more freedom he allowed himself."

The Miami portfolio requires a piece of reflective writing because research has made it increasingly clear that thinking about what we have learned or are learning leads to future learning. Portfolio grading becomes a form of assessment that, unlike multiple choice examinations or impromptu essays, in itself stimulates learning and in this way models the education process at its best—with assessment inseparable from learning. The reflective piece invites writers to evaluate the contents of their portfolio and their development as writers, and thus endorses the value of self-assessment. Students who evaluate their own work gain practice in formulating and applying evaluative criteria, a process which helps them not only to read and respond more thoughtfully to the writing of others, both professionals and classmates, but also to continue the process of developing their own set of standards for use once they have left school. We need to remind ourselves again and again that we assess students today so that they can assess themselves tomorrow.

The last and perhaps most important characteristic of the Miami portfolio is that it offers a series of significant choices. Writers choose 1) which of their pieces to submit, a choice which

sometimes means deciding between a piece on hand and composing a new one; 2) how extensively, if at all, they will revise each piece; and 3) when and where they will do their writing and revising. In granting students a large measure of control over their work, in giving them essential ownership of it, the Miami portfolio treats them as genuine writers. And when treated as writers and given significant choices, students gain self-confidence both as writers and persons, develop critical thinking and evaluative skills, and become more independent. One major implication of the Miami program is that the opportunity to make choices leads to learning and growth.

Several other important implications for teaching emerge from considering together all five characteristics of the Miami program. The first is that the portfolio program encourages sustained thinking and continuing effort. Unlike timed impromptu essays, which reward students who think fast and reach quick, often glib conclusions—after all, there's at most two hours to think and write about a complex question or series of questions—a portfolio allows students to think long and deep about an issue. Whereas students get only a single chance with multiple choice examinations or timed impromptu essays, a portfolio allows as many chances as the student wants—and in this way it conveys the positive message that continuing effort can lead to improvement.

The emphasis on improvement though continuing effort is not the only implication of Miami's portfolio with direct bearing upon classroom instruction. Equally important is that portfolios help teachers focus more on texts than on grades: if all texts may be revised, as portfolio assessment generally assumes, than all grades before the final submission deadline must be tentative ones. And since most students offered the chance will work to strengthen their papers so as to improve their grade, portfolios encourage students and teachers to be allies rather than antagonists—especially if the portfolio is to be submitted to evaluators other than the teacher.

Finally, a portfolio carries two strong implications for evaluation. The first is that it makes sense to evaluate students on the basis of their best work, not their "average" work. We follow the same principle in valuing professional writers: we judge Melville to be a great writer because of the achievement of *Moby-Dick*, *The Confidence-Man*, and *Billy Budd*—not by somehow averaging them with *Omoo*, *Redburn*, and *Timoleon*. The second implication is that portfolios

make possible local control of evaluation. With training and practice teachers at all levels are able both to create a portfolio program and to score portfolios reliably. It is no longer necessary to rely on the Educational Testing Service for administering and scoring multiple choice tests or essay examinations.

Effects on High School Instruction

These are, at least in theory, some of the broader pedagogical implications of Miami's portfolio writing program. To ascertain the actual effects of Miami's portfolio program on high school instruction, we asked five high school English teachers to keep a log of their teaching activities during the first year-and-a half of the Miami University Portfolio Writing Program. In the log, we asked them to record any effects of Miami's portfolio program on their teaching and on their students' behavior and attitudes; some teachers asked their students to evaluate the portfolio program and included their responses within the log. In addition, we conducted and videotaped a 45-minute interview with each of the teachers: most questions asked during the interview focused on the impact of a college writing portfolio on high school teaching and learning. All five participating teachers teach senior English classes at high schools that each year send at least several students to Miami University. The teachers are Marilyn Elzey of Talawanda High School in Oxford, DJ Hammond of Madeira High School in Cincinnati, John Kuehn of Fairmont High School in Kettering, Teri Lee Phillips of Mt. Healthy High School in Cincinnati, and Doris Riddle of Norwood High School in Cincinnati.

Teacher interviews, teacher logs, and student testimony included within the logs reveal how warmly students welcome the opportunity portfolios provide to submit several different kinds of writing composed on different occasions and how decisively they reject the impromptu, one-sitting, critical analysis model of the Advanced Placement program. One of John's students, Stacy Jarrett, wrote that her world "bloomed" when she encountered the portfolio system. She said, " I was able to write about what I wanted when I wanted and revise and edit for the entire time." Steve Mallorca, one of DJ's students, summarized the strengths of portfolios in relation to timed impromptu testing with the comment, "Instead of rating the skills of a student's work in three hours (like the AP test), it [portfolio assessment] rates a student's life work."

During his interview John was asked whether Miami's portfolio assessment program was more in keeping with his principles for teaching writing than the AP test or a timed essay examination on an unannounced topic. Here is his response:

> Yes, because the unannounced topic requires a certain talent, and that talent is not what I teach. I don't think I can teach that talent, to just sit down under pressure and write well. Some students can and some cannot. If we believe that writing is a process, that it involves conferencing and revision and work and introspection, you don't do that in two hours or one hour.

So one clear implication of a portfolio program is that participating students—and teachers—may grow increasingly skeptical that a one-shot, timed essay written on a surprise topic adequately measures their writing competence. A second is that high school teachers feel challenged to assign different kinds of writing for their students, as Marilyn notes:

> I was explaining portfolio assessment to my accelerated juniors. They were confused about an explanatory essay and when I explained it they remembered they had written something like that freshman year. Made me think that if we got our act together and had kids write each kind of writing each year and put a sample in their folders then by the time they were seniors they'd have an assortment to go through and select what they wanted to revise.

An equally important implication of a college portfolio writing program is that high school students come more and more to practice revision and to believe in its value. John reported in his teacher's log that a student of his "was amazed to find that one of her pieces had gone through five drafts, each one heavily rescribbled. She said that before this year it was one draft and a few changes and a clean copy." Several of Teri's senior students asked if they could revise a piece of writing from their junior year to include in their semester's work and in Miami's portfolio. One major reason why portfolios help students value revision, according to DJ's student Brandy Burns, is that portfolios "show how our writings have improved from draft to draft. They motivate us to do the best we can on our papers." For some students, the opportunity to revise makes a crucial difference. Marilyn noted in her log that "Teresa never does well in one-shot writing situations. Give her time to think and brainstorm and revise and her writing is totally different."

In part because portfolios demonstrate that students like Brandy and Teresa are able to

dramatically improve their writing through revision, teachers find themselves more motivated than ever before to spend classroom time teaching revision. In an early entry in her log Marilyn noted this change: "When I think about it, I am much more conscientious about making sure kids know how to revise. If this portfolio thing is going to work, kids have got to learn how to do more revising on their own! I'd like to have one of our English department meetings dedicated to just that—what do other teachers do to get their kids to revise!?" John suggests in his log that because portfolios encourage teachers to emphasize the process of revising—moving a piece of writing from one stage to another—they help students not only to grow as writers but to see their own growth.

If the process of revising pieces for their portfolio enables students to see that they have grown as writers, the reflective letter invites them to consider not only ways in which they have grown but reasons for their growth. Typically, the reflective letter allows students to move in one of several related directions: to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their portfolio; to explain key choices in assembling their portfolio; to contrast their most and least successful piece; to describe their writing process—either in general terms or for one specific portfolio piece; to discuss their evolution as writers or the place of writing in their life; or to formulate their writing goals for the future. In part inspired by Miami's requirement of a reflective letter, Teri starts each quarter by handing out portfolios and asking students to look over pieces they had written the previous quarter, to assess their strengths and weaknesses as writers, and then to set goals for themselves for the next ten weeks.

What is common to reflective writing, regardless of which topic students choose, is self-assessment: students examine their writing products, their writing process, or their writing history in order to find patterns of development and success. John writes in his log that "The portfolio in general and the reflective piece in particular make it possible, actually inevitable, that kids grow as writers and see themselves grow. They may not have a grip on a great draft, but they all know a rough draft is a long way from a polished piece, and they know how to get from rough to polished a whole lot better."

The self-assessment integral to reflective writing is of course built into the portfolio process itself. At Mt. Healthy High School, for example, students in consultation with Teri or another teacher select a piece of writing each quarter for inclusion in their permanent portfolio: deciding

which piece to include obviously involves self-assessment. And, as DJ notes in her log, there is a close connection between self-assessment and critical thinking:

> One of the main appeals of portfolio assessment seems to me to be the amount of sustained thought it requires. Done properly, students spend a year thinking about the pieces in their folder, deciding which pieces to revise and which to include in the final portfolio. Certainly this evaluation would call for some critical thinking skills on the part of the kids. Which pieces are my favorites? Which are the "best"? Are those pieces which are my favorite most likely to appeal to an "unknown" audience of graders? That reflection seems an enormously valuable learning technique.

DJ's observations echo the findings of Thomas L. Hilgers (1986), whose research suggests that self-assessment is "the cornerstone upon which rest the successful writer's composing skills. This is true whatever the age of the writer and whatever the writer's definition of success."

The twin processes of reflection and self-assessment each depend upon choice—the portfolio writer's freedom to make key decisions before, during, and after writing. John believes that choice is the reason so many of his students are drawn toward portfolios. "I do know that dozens of my 70 seniors love the portfolio system—the opportunity and the time to try alternate approaches, the freedom to bash one weekend with extracurricular activities while spending another weekend at their typewriters or word processors." And according to John's students themselves, choice is the crucial element in portfolios. "I like it, " Brian Damewood writes. "The portfolio system gives me the freedom to work on up to three topics at a time rather than concentrating on one paper or topic. I'm finding that I don't have the burnout or mental block while writing that I used to experience." Derek Marsee is even more emphatic in praising the choices portfolios allow: "The portfolio system is a great idea. I don't feel constricted by an immediate deadline, and when I don't feel like working on one piece, I work on another." John said in his interview that portfolios influenced his classroom not only by giving students more choices but by "putting me in a position where I could grant more student choices and options."

Perhaps in part because students welcomed the opportunity for choice, John judged his classroom use of portfolios to be an extraordinary success and a major source of the "triumphant feelings" he experienced during the term. "Using portfolios has affected my role dramatically, positively," he wrote. "I am writing coach 95% of the time, evaluator only a tad. I like that." For

DJ, as for John, Miami's portfolio writing program helped change her role in the classroom and her relationship to her students. She noted in her log that college portfolios encourage conferencing between students and teachers. "Of course, students can compile a portfolio on their own, but there is that opportunity for really meaningful dialogue." Doris reported that portfolios also had a salutary effect on relationships with her students. "We became closer, much, much closer," she said. "I'm talking in terms of relating as writers primarily, rather than so much as teacher-pupil. And they were, I think, less bothered by comments than they might have been. Students often tend to be defensive regarding their writing and I think they were less defensive, much more open."

What is even clearer to the participating teachers is the effect of portfolios on student attitudes. All reported that the portfolio program helped students develop positive attitudes toward writing in general and toward their own writing in particular. DJ believes it is the "real" audience portfolios provide that encourages students to revalue their own work:

> The notion of a "real" audience is a powerful one. So what am I, chopped liver, the old joke goes. But it's true. When Miami University is willing to give college credit for papers written in high school, those papers are suddenly raised from the status of another dumb assignment to something valuable since somebody else values it. Interestingly, I find this true even for students not planning on attending Miami University. Because you value high school writing, they value high school writing.

Teri agrees that audience is crucial for motivating high school students to do their best work because " it's a form of publication, and I think they liked that idea." Other teachers agree that working on papers that may be included in a college portfolio helps students take their writing more seriously and responsibly. Doris is convinced that the portfolio program made her students more conscientious about revising, especially those planning to submit. Marilyn said in her interview that her students, like Doris's, asked her more questions about writing than ever before, a sure sign of increased interest, and that they were "much more serious, much more conscientious, spending more time in revision." They realized, Marilyn said, that "there was more of a purpose for what they were doing."

Summary

The major pedagogical implications of Miami's portfolio writing program for high school teaching and learning appear to be 1) increased skepticism on the part of students and teachers alike that a one-shot impromptu writing examination is a valid measure of writing competence; 2) teacher willingness to assign and accept more different kinds of writing; 3) increased instruction in revision by teachers and increased practice of revision by students; 4) more attention to self-assessment through various forms of reflective writing; 5) more choices for student writers—before, during, and after writing; 6) a redefined role for teachers, with new emphasis on teacher as mentor or coach rather than evaluator; and 7) heightened student motivation, conscientiousness, and self-confidence. Significantly, each teacher with students preparing a portfolio for Miami University ultimately decided to use portfolio assessment within his or her own classrooms.

Works Cited

Breland, Hunter and others. *Assessing Writing Skill.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1987.

Charney, Davida. "The Validity of Using Holistic Scoring to Evaluate Writing: A Critical Overview." *Research in the Teaching of English* 18.1 (1984): 65-81.

Coffman, William. "On the Reliability of Ratings of Essay Examinations in English." *Research in the Teaching of English* 7 (1971): 356-371.

Cooper, Charles. "Holistic Evaluation of Writing." In Charles Cooper and Lee Odell, eds., *Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977.

Cooper, Charles and Lee Odell, eds. *Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977.

Daiker, Donald A. and Nedra Grogan. "Selecting and Using Sample Papers in Holistic Evaluation." *Journal of Advanced Composition* 11.1 (1991): 159-171.

Godshalk, Fred I., Frances Swineford, and William E. Coffman. *The Measurement of Writing Ability.* Research Monograph 6. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1966.

Hilgers, Thomas. "How Children Change as Critical Evaluators of Writing." *Research in the Teaching of English* 20.1 (1986): 36-55.

Hoetker, James. "Essay Examination Topics and Student Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 33 (1982): 377-392.

Huot, Brian. "Reliability, Validity, and Holistic Scoring: What We Know and What We Need to Know." *College Composition and Communication* 41.2 (1990a): 201-213.

___. "The Literature of Direct Writing Assessment: Major Concerns and Prevailing Trends." *Review of Educational Research* 60.2 (1990b): 237-263.

Lunsford, Andrea. "The Past—and Future—of Writing Assessment." In Lester Faigley, Roger Cherry, David Joliffe, and Anna M. Skinner, eds., *Assessing Writers' Knowledge and Processes of Composing.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1985.

McColly, William. "What Does Educational Research Say About the Judging of Writing?" *Journal of Educational Research* 64 (1970): 148-156.

Myers, Miles. *A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980.

Popken, Randall L. "Essay Exams and Papers: A Contextual Comparison." *Journal of Teaching Writing* 8.1 (1989): 51-66.

Quellmalz, Edys, Frank J. Capell, and Chih-Ping Chou. "Effects of Discourse and Response Mode on the Measurement of Writing Competence." *Journal of Educational Measurement* 19 (1982): 241-258.

White, Edward M. "Effects of Placement Testing." Paper presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Seattle, March 1989.

___. *Teaching and Assessing Writing.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

White, Edward M. and Linda Poulin. *Research in Effective Teaching of Writing:* Volumes I and II. Final Project Report to California State University Foundation. ERIC, 1986. ED 275007

Bibliography

BOOKS

Belanoff, Pat and Marcia Dickson, eds. *Portfolio: Process and Product.* Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1991.

Daiker, Donald A., Jeffrey Sommers, Gail Stygall, and Laurel Black, eds. *New Directions in Portfolio Assessment.* Portsmouth: Heinemann, Boyton/Cook, 1993 (in press).

Murphy, Sandra and Mary Ann Smith. *Writing Portfolios: A Bridge from Teaching to Assessment.* Markham, Ontario: Pippin Publishers, Ltd., 1991.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. *Portfolios in the Writing Classroon: An Introduction.* Urbana: NCTE, 1992.

ARTICLES/CHAPTERS

Belanoff, Pat and Peter Elbow. "Using Portfolios to Increase Collaboration and Community in a Writing Program." *WPA.* 9: 3 (Spring 1986): 27-40.

Burnham, Christopher. "Portfolio Evaluation: Room to Breathe and Grow." *Training the New Teacher of College Composition.* Ed. Charles Bridges. Urbana: NCTE, 1986, 125-138.

Camp, Roberta. "Thinking about Portfolios." *The Quarterly of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing.* 12:3 (1990): 8-14, 27.

Elbow, Peter and Pat Belanoff. "Portfolios as a Substitute for Proficiency Examinations." *College Composition and Communication.* 37 (1986): 336-339.

Elbow, Peter and Pat Belanoff. "State University of New York, Stony Brook: Portfolio-Based Evaluation Program." In *New Methods in College Writing Programs.* Ed. Paul Connolly and Teresa Vilardi. New York: MLA, 1986, 95-105.

Ford, James E. and Gregory Larkin. "The Portfolio System: An End to Backsliding Writing Standards." *College English.* 39 (1978): 950-55.

Lucas, Catharine. "Toward Ecological Evaluation." *The Quarterly* 10:1 (1988): 1-17.

Lucas, Catharine. "Toward Ecological Evaluation: Recontextualizing Literacy Assessment." *The Quarterly* 10:2 (1988): 4-17.

Murphy, Sandra, and Mary Ann Smith. "Talking about Portfolios." *The Quarterly of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing.* 12: 3 (1990): 1-3, 24-27.

Smit, David W. "Evaluating a Portfolio System." *WPA.* 14: 102 (Fall/Winter 1990): 51-62.

NEWSLETTERS

Portfolio News, c/o San Dieguito Union High School District, 710 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, CA 92024.

Portfolio—The Newsletter of Arts PROPEL, Harvard Project Zero, 323 Longfellow Hall, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 13 Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Portfolio News-Letter, c/o English Department, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Charlotte, NC 28223.

Appendix A: 1993 Description of Portfolio Contents

A portfolio consists of a completed information form together with the following four (4) equally important pieces of prose writing. Poetry may be included as part of any of the pieces. Miami's Department of English follows the NCTE *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language.*

1. A Reflective Letter

This letter, addressed to Miami University writing teachers, introduces you and your portfolio. It may describe the process used in creating any one portfolio piece, discuss important choices in creating the portfolio, explain the place of writing in your life, chronicle your development as a writer, assess the strengths and weaknesses of your writing, or combine these approaches. Your letter should give readers a clearer understanding of who you are as a writer and as a person.

2. A Story or a Description

This narrative or descriptive piece should be based upon your own experience. Its aim is to communicate a significant experience rather than explain it. Your writing will most likely be personal and informal. A short story is acceptable.

3. An Explanatory, Exploratory, or Persuasive Essay

It may be formal or informal in style, but it should have a strong focus and a clear central idea or direction. The aim of both an explanatory or exploratory essay is to be informative and enlightening, but an explanatory essay *answers* questions whereas an exploratory essay *raises* them. The aim of a persuasive paper is to be convincing, to change the reader's mind or heart or both. A paper that explains a physical process—a "how-to" paper—is not appropriate. Neither is a research paper that merely assembles information from other sources and is not based on your own ideas. This essay may have been begun in a high school course other than English.

4. A Response to a Written Text

This essay should respond to a short story, novel, poem, play, or piece of non-fiction prose written by a professional, a classmate, or yourself. It may interpret all or part of the text, evaluate it, show how it works, explain its significance, compare it to other texts, relate it to personal experience and values, or combine these approaches. Even if some secondary sources are used, readers should come away with a strong sense of your own response to the text. (If the text is not commonly known, a copy of it should be included in the portfolio.)

Appendix B: 1993 Guidelines for Portfolio Submission

1. All materials must be mailed on or before June 1, 1993 by your supervising teacher—the English teacher most familiar with the pieces in your portfolio. The supervising teacher signs a form that, to the best of her or his knowledge, all writing in the portfolio is your own. You sign a similar statement.

2. Arrange your portfolio items in this order: a) completed information form; b) reflective letter; c) story or description; d) explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay; and e) response to a written text.

3. Your written work—not counting the information form and not counting the draft material requested in #4 below—should in no case exceed 12 typed, doublespaced pages (8.5 x 11").

4. For any one piece, include all draft material (paper clipped at the end of the appropriate essay).

5. All items—except the draft material of item #4 above—must be free of teachers' comments, grades, and markings.

6. Do not write your name anywhere except on the information form, but do write your social security number in the upper right corner of each page. Pieces 2, 3, and 4 should have a title.

7. No staples should be used. The 5-item portfolio should be fastened with a paper clip.

8. Papers written in class or out of school, including college application essays, are acceptable. Papers may be revised after being returned by a teacher.

9. You will be rewarded for originality and variety so long as you observe "Portfolio Contents."

10. Portfolio submission costs $21, but you will receive a $10 gift certificate from Follett's Miami Coop Bookstore and you will not be billed until the summer. Results will be available by mid-June—in time for registration at summer orientation.

PORTFOLIOS MUST BE
POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN
JUNE 1, 1993

Send to

PORTFOLIO
Department of English
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056
(513) 529-5221

Appendix C: 1993 Portfolio Information Form

To the Student: Complete the first half of this form (type or print) and give it to your supervising teacher along with your portfolio and a stamped 10 x 13 envelope addressed to Portfolio, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056.

Student's Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Student's Home Address: (street) _____

(city) _____ (state) _____

(zip) _____ Home Phone (_____) _____

Will you be (check one): ____ an entering first-year student ____ an upperclass Miami student

____ a transfer student ____ other _____

At what Miami campus will you enroll (check one): ____ Oxford ____ Hamilton ____ Middletown

I pledge that all the writing included in the attached portfolio is my own, and I grant Miami University permission to publish all or part of its contents.

Signature of Student _____

* * * * *

To the Teacher: If you believe this portfolio contains only the student's own work, please complete this form, insert it and the portfolio into the envelope provided, and mail it by June 1, 1993. Thank you!

Name of Supervising Teacher: _____

Teacher's Home Phone Number: _____

Teacher's Home Address: (street) _____

(city) _____ (state) _____ (zip) _____

Name of High School: _____

Principal's Name: _____

High School Address: (street) _____

(city) _____ (state) _____ (zip) _____

To the best of my knowledge, the attached portfolio has been written by this student.

Signature of Teacher _____

This form may be reproduced

Appendix D: 1992 Invitation to the Student

February 24, 1992

Dear Student:

I am pleased to learn that you are considering attending Miami University and have submitted an application for the 1992-93 academic year. Although final decisions have not yet been made, I am writing to every Miami University applicant to inform you about an optional way of earning credit and advanced placement in first-year College Composition—the Miami University Writing Portfolio Program. Last year, almost 45% of participating students received either three or six credits.

Students who enter Miami may earn credit in first-year English in one of two ways: by scoring a "4" or a "5" on the Advanced Placement examination, or by submitting a writing portfolio, a collection of four of their best pieces of writing. Students whose portfolios are rated as excellent will receive six hours of credit and completely fulfill the first-year composition requirement; students whose portfolios are rated as good will earn three hours of credit and receive advanced placement in composition.

Even if you are in an AP English class and plan on placing out of English with the AP exam, the portfolio can provide a safety net. (A number of strong writers last year found themselves in ENG 111-112, the two-course composition sequence, because they counted on the AP exam solely and didn't do as well as they had hoped.) Therefore, you should give serious consideration to submitting a portfolio.

If you decide to prepare and submit a portfolio, please follow the enclosed guidelines. Note that the submission deadline is May 29, 1992. Please note, too, the requirement of draft materials for one of your selections. We will evaluate your portfolio in early June, and you will be notified of the results in time for registration at Summer Orientation. The cost for portfolio evaluation is $21, for which you will be billed this summer. Students who earn credit will be charged an additional fee to post the credits to their records. But all students who submit a portfolio will receive coupons worth $10 in books and supplies at the Miami Coop Bookstore.

I am pleased that Miami University is—to the best of my knowledge—the only university in the country to offer students the opportunity to earn credit in first-year composition by submitting a collection of their best writing.

If you have any questions about the optional portfolio program, please feel free to write or call me. I'll be happy to help.

Sincerely,

Susan Jarratt

Susan Jarratt
Director of College Composition

Appendix E: 1992 Scoring Guide for Portfolios

General Directions: Each portfolio should be read holistically and given a single comprehensive score on a six-point scale ("6" is high and "1" is low). In determining that single score, do not average the four pieces but judge the quality of the portfolio as a whole. In doing so, give greater weight to the longer and more substantial pieces, and reward variety and creativity. Please consult the chief reader if you believe a portfolio does not meet the stated requirements or if for any other reason you have trouble scoring it.

6 A portfolio that is excellent in overall quality. It is characteristically substantial in content (both length and development) and mature in style. It demonstrates an ability to handle varied prose tasks successfully and to use language creatively and effectively. Voice tends to be strong, and there is usually a clear sense of audience and context. Often, there is a close connection between the writer's sense of self and the writing—and/or a sense of thematic unity within the four separate portfolio pieces. A "6" portfolio typically takes risks that work—either in content or form—and challenges the reader by trying something new.

5 A portfolio that is very good in overall quality. It suggests the excellence that the "6" portfolio demonstrates. Typically, a "5" portfolio is substantial in content, although its pieces are not as fully developed as a "6," and it uses language effectively but not as creatively as a "6." It suggests an ability to handle varied prose tasks successfully, and its voice is clear and distinct if not powerful. Sense of audience and context is clearly present if not always firm. A "5" portfolio tends not to take as many risks as a "6."

4 A portfolio that is good in overall quality. The writing is competent both in content and style. There are more strengths than weaknesses, but there may be an unevenness of quality or underdevelopment in one or two pieces. The reader may want "more" to be fully convinced of the writer's ability to handle varied prose tasks successfully and to use language effectively. There is a sense of audience and context, but some of the writing may seem formulaic or lack strong voice. There tends to be minimal risk-taking or originality.

3 A portfolio that is fair in overall quality. It suggests the competence that a "4" portfolio demonstrates. Strengths and weaknesses tend to be evenly balanced—either within or among the four pieces. One or more of the pieces may be too brief or underdeveloped. There is some evidence of the writer's ability to handle varied prose tasks successfully and to use language effectively, but it is offset by recurring problems in either or both content and style. A "3" portfolio often lacks both a clear sense of audience and a distinctive voice.

2 A portfolio that is below average in overall quality. It does not suggest the writing competence that a "3" portfolio does. Weaknesses clearly predominate over strengths. The writing may be clear, focused, and error-free, but it is usually thin in substance and undistinguished in style. Two or more of the pieces may be either short and undeveloped or abstract and vague. Moreover, the writer rarely takes risks, relying instead on formulas and cliches. There is little evidence of the writer's ability to handle varied prose tasks successfully. The few strengths of a "2" are more than overbalanced by significant weaknesses.

1 A portfolio that is poor in overall quality. There are major weaknesses and few, if any, strengths. A "1" portfolio lacks the redeeming qualities of a "2." It is usually characterized by brief pieces that are unoriginal and uncreative in content and style. The portfolio seems to have been put together with very little time and thought.

Appendix F: Portfolio by Marie Steele

"6" Portfolio

Madeira High School

Cincinnati, Ohio

Supervising Teacher: DJ Hammond

REFLECTIVE LETTER

Dear Readers,

I love to write, and, sometimes, I write well. Sometimes I can point to a poem or a sentence I've written and see myself. I can see the part of me that is permanent and will remain after I stop being a restless eighteen year old trying to sound cute or cynical or earnest.

However, usually this doesn't happen. I've [illegible]ed to unconsciously borrow the writing style of whomever I'm reading at the time. When I wrote my creative piece, I was enraptured with Sylvia Plath; seeing her restrained anguish ooze from my first draft now makes me cringe. Throughout the revisions, I've tried to eliminate any artificial melancholy, cliches, or sentimentality and struggled to create a voice with integrity. I didn't want my character to whine or become pathetic.

My literary analysis also ran the danger of cliches because I used one of Shakespeare's most famous soliloquies. But it was so beautiful, I couldn't help it.

The other section of this portfolio, the explanatory essay, is really literary analysis—the text being modern slang. My inspiration was the television commercials saying, "This is your brain on drugs" and showing an egg frying on a skillet. It occurred to me that this image wasn't the result of a brilliant advertising executive; this metaphor was created through the terming of drug induced brain damage as "fried." The power and implications of slang phrasing are probably material enough for a book. But my English teacher required three pages. I never thought I'd enjoy writing those three pages as much as I did.

I am grateful for the time spent reading my papers and the opportunity to become exempt from certain classes as a result.

THE LOVE LETTER

Hey Luv,

How are you on days like today? The sun's in its mid-June glare and the clovers are fresh. I tied them together in a crown for you. (You're the only guy I've ever met who was brave enough to wear one.) They're stiff and brown and dry now. Still, I can't throw them away.

The news, here in the wild town of Gladstone, has been minimal since you left. Chip caused an accident by pointing a squirt gun at an oncoming motorist, a few houses have been toilet-papered this summer, Dad just won his seventh consecutive free Coke from McDonald's "scratch 'n' win game" and has vowed to name his next child after the restaurant. And Katie broke the dishwasher after tampering with the controls, trying to delay doing the dishes those crucial twenty minutes.

The only other point of interest this summer was the funeral. Some

forgotten great, great Uncle had a fatal stroke. It was strange being there—I wish you could have seen it. His face looked like a piece of dough drowning in flesh colored powder. A group of mothers were discussing the merits of breast feeding and a trickle of kids were wandering in the halls. Only three people cried. You probably would have cried with them. I didn't.

It was only the second funeral I've been to, and part of me was still numb from the first time. There, people stood like stone zombies, google-eyed and tight-lipped. At the wake the children were silent, and the women wailed.

I've changed a lot since you last saw me—I've stopped writing poetry. I can't help it. It makes me sick. Once I tried to burn the whole stack but Dad stopped me and is still hiding them out of fear. My hair sticks out in thick, sweaty, black tangles. By now, if you tried to pull a comb through it the teeth would fall out. My mom's been bullying me into cutting my bangs. "They're covering your pretty eyes," she says. "How can you see? Do you know how sloppy you look?" I refuse to let it happen, though. My eyes would be naked and exposed by a mid-forehead fringe. Everyone is still worried; complete strangers come up to me and ask how I am. The word "fine" has become an incantation with the power to soothe. My parents made me see a doctor because I cried so much, but then they stopped because the insurance didn't cover it.

But I feel better today. Not enough to forget you left me. But enough to forgive your leaving and to write you. This morning I was in the park watching kids torture cicadas when a little boy laughed at his brother eating sand. At first it was a squeal—but then the sound gained power so that both boys were in the sandbox, rolling and shaking. It must have lasted fifteen minutes, in hard spurts, pushing the air and scaring the wrens. It reminded me of you, of how you laughed and made the air tremble and the birds fly away. It made me want to sit there in the sand and laugh until my throat hurt. And it made me want to tell

you how I've been and how now I am going to be OK. You don't have to worry now. I'm fine and I'm going to be fine.

Love,

Meg.

Meg threw the blue pen across the room. She looked hard at her pile of useless things she couldn't store away: her Raggedy Ann doll, a plastic rosary, an honorable mention for a 6th grade essay, a ceramic angel, and, on top, the withered flower chain. With an uncertain hand she placed the fossilized crown with her letter into the envelope. Outside it was dusk; she opened the window and looked up at the sky, which was soft purple deepening along the rims of the clouds. It smelled like grass. She smiled, and then she showered, scrubbing her face and pulling back her hair.

She stuffed the envelope and its contents into her pocket, stepped into her car, and drove. It was night when she finally reached the wrought iron gates proclaiming "Gates of Paradise." She stepped out and ignored the marble slabs and granite statues until she recognized her destination. Instead of staring at it, she stared up. The first stars made her calm and then, feeling strong, she placed the envelope on the stone marker.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SLANG

As an English teacher, consider the merits of the following sentences.

After drinking the vodka, he was inebriated.

After drinking the vodka, he was smashed.

Both sentences communicate the same fact and are identical except for the last word. Inebriated and smashed, in the context, denote intoxication through alcohol. However, the difference between the two words lies beyond their definition. "Inebriated" says whatever it describes is drunk, and whoever is giving the description has an impressive and sophisticated vocabulary. "Smashed" says whatever it describes is drunk, and every stereotype that applies to slang users applies to the speaker. He/she is unsophisticated and lacks extensive education.

But "smashed" implies more. Through its root word, the verb "smash," and its onomonopoeic quality, "smashed" creates the image of something shattered. A drunk man becomes a man in pieces; alcohol becomes a violent, physical blow. The adjective, therefore, goes beyond adequate. It implies an entire metaphor.

Other slang adjectives for drunkenness include "sloshed," common during the 1940's, and "tight," used mostly during the twenties. All of these words trigger associations. The sound of "sloshed," through its "s"s and short "o," compels the memory of rubber boots in rain puddles. "Slosh" literally means to flounder or splash through water, and "sloshed" carries within it the implication of helplessness, of a loss of dignity through liquids. "Tight" connotes the definite physical sensation of tension. Of the fifteen definitions given for the word in my dictionary, the one closest to drunkenness uses "tight" to describe a drumhead. A drunk man is firmly stretched or drawn; a drunk man is pulled many ways.

The argument against slang is legitimate. Original and creative words become overused and quickly degenerate into cliches. They then must be discarded for newer words. The old slang becomes dated and eventually forgotten. However, some slang integrates with semi-formal English. "Yuppies,"

an anagram for young upwardly mobile professionals, is an acceptable term used by sociologists to define a class of people. Even the words which don't survive deserve to be acknowledged because they are part of the culture which created them and can be used as a tool to study that culture. In the late sixties, drug usage was described as "getting high" and a person suffering any emotional or neurological damage from drug usage was simply labeled "gone." It should be noted that now a person suffering irreparable brain damage is "fried." A shift in the language marks a shift in attitude, and records of slang should be preserved for cultural study.

Another argument against slang is its lack of precision. It is impossible to use slang to write exposition because slang doesn't lend itself to complex academic ideas. Its strength lies in its power to connote images, to conjure up a personal reaction. Anything which relies on what the individual associates with it could never be objective.

But it was never designed for cerebral intricacies. Its strength lies in its ability to make abstractions solid. The significant difference between "inebriated" and "smashed" is "inebriated" tries to name an intangible quality while "smashed" tries to make an intangible quality tangible. Its tendency to use concrete words to describe states of being, like drunkenness, is fundamental to the English language.

Emerson explained:

> Every word which is used to describe a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its roots, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. Right means straight; wrong means twisted. Spirit primarily means wind; transgression the crossing of a line; supercilious the raising of an eyebrow.

Slang is a legitimate tool of expression and communication. It contains a poetic power and the ability to provide a mirror to our culture. Both should be acknowledged.

THE TWO VISIONS OF MACBETH

In Macbeth, Shakespeare endowed each of his characters with a separate voice, mirroring the character's perspective. Through Macbeth's soliloquy on the death of his wife, and the doctor's on the sleepwalking of Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare presents two different views of life and its worth.

In the first soliloquy Shakespeare uses the persona of an ambitious king on the brink of battle. He is at the peak of his imagined invincibility when his wife's scream reminds him that he is capable of fear (V,v). Then he discovers his wife's death and offers his belief on life.

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. (V,v)

Because nobody has disproved his blinding confidence, his words are not spoken out of desperation. Because his first sentence after Lady Macbeth's death, "She should have died hereafter; There would have been time for such a word," gives no indication of real grief, just regret that he has no time for mourning before his battle, his words are not spoken out of sorrow. They objectively explain his beliefs and possibly mark the first full realization of those beliefs. He describes life as "this petty pace" which the future slips through to become the past, "our

yesterdays," as guides fools misuse to fight the process of time. He elaborates on the "petty pace":

> Out, out brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon a stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing. (V,v)

"Walking shadow" and "brief candle" both use the metaphors of lightness and darkness because neither have substance. Macbeth doesn't foresee an afterlife for himself. And, despite his title of King, the power this entails, and the power (the ambition, the ruthlessness, and the murder of at least five people) necessary to acquire it, Macbeth's deeds are reduced to the over-flamboyant acts of a "poor player." The idiot telling the tale of humans' lives, filling it with noise and rage and emotion, but no meaning, is, presumably, either God or Macbeth. Macbeth's faith in his immortality and refusal to see beyond himself elevate him to the status of a god in his own eyes. Any other divine judge would condemn him, so he doesn't seek the judgment of God. The exact identity of the idiot is not specified because it is irrelevant.

Macbeth's view of life and God opposes the Doctor's. The Doctor, hired to alleviate Lady Macbeth's nightwalking, implies his belief in life's meaning by expressing his uselessness in ending his patient's misery.

> More needs she the divine than the physician.
> God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
> Remove her from the means of all annoyance,
> And still keep eyes upon her. So good night. (V,v)

In the first line the Doctor is able to acknowledge his inabilities—she will go on

suffering despite whatever he, "the physician," does—and believe in life's meaning. He offers the existence of divinity outside of his own powers. This is the inverse of Macbeth's situation. Because of the weird sisters' prophecy, Macbeth is unaware of his vulnerability and mortality. However he doesn't accept the possibility of meaning in his life. For Macbeth, there is no worthwhile God to ask forgiveness from, and life, "the walking shadow," because of its brevity, is not worth the effort of forgiveness, or the removal of injury, or a tireless vigil. The doctor goes on to say that Lady Macbeth has "amazed my sight" (V,i).

After realizing the meaninglessness of life, Macbeth would have been incapable of amazement. Unlike Macbeth, the Doctor sees a place in heaven assured to him. In fact, "God, God forgive us all!" implies that the Doctor sees the hope of heaven for everyone. No one is past redemption or forgiveness. His soliloquy doesn't simply display optimism as a foil for Macbeth's pessimism. "God, God forgive us all!" becomes a prayer covering humanity. Mankind is not divided and judged, but offered up as "us all." The implicit assumption is of mass salvation.

Through the two voices of the Doctor and Macbeth, Macbeth encompasses the contradictions of disillusionment and prayer. The unquestioned assumption of God and the realized insignificance of God extend past the characters and their circumstances to become universal. Most elements of modern religion and art either detail the "tale/told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/signifying nothing" or acknowledge the necessity of forgiveness and say, "God, God forgive us all!"

Appendix G: Portfolio by Matthew Cavanaugh

"4" Portfolio

Chaminade College Prep

St. Louis, Missouri

Supervising Teacher: Brenda Singleton

CREATING MY EXPRESSIONS

Miami University Writing Professors:

Writing for me begins at the computer. After making a brief, sketchy outline on a piece of scrap paper, I start to type. The ideas are not usually well developed but rather spontaneous. I let my ideas flow very quickly trying to produce many different ideas and a large amount of copy from which to build. After expressing what I feel is enough information, I begin to organize my ideas. After using the cut and paste function on my computer to move certain paragraphs and to eliminate others, I expand upon my ideas. I try to find quotations and additional data to support and to further develop an idea. After adding this information to the paper, I read the entire paper out loud. By doing this, I can hear what sounds awkward or underdeveloped. I circle these areas. I also determine areas which need better word choice. Next, I get out my thesaurus and eliminate weak verbs such as forms of the verb to be. At this time,

I also change and add adjectives to paint a more vivid image for the reader. Once this is finished, I re-read the paper out loud to hear how it sounds to the ear. Lastly, I spell check the paper to find spelling errors before printing the final copy.

I feel that I have developed my skill of writing very thoroughly, and I have overcome the barriers that prevented me from motivating myself to sit down and write. I had the opportunity to dabble in many different types of writings from descriptive to short stories to critical analysis. In doing so, I feel that I have mastered my grammar skills as well as my ability to analyze and to organize ideas. Each of my pieces of writing contain a little piece of me whether they are a formal or informal writing.

A TALE OF TWO BACKYARDS

Silence encompasses me as I sit in solitude in the kitchen. As I glance out the window, a lost friend reaches out to grab my hand. Together we venture back into a land that has disappeared from my sight. The pale blue sky blends with the green ground like a watercolor painting. The plush lawn extends into the horizon. The tulips, irises, and jonquils in the right hand corner of the plot form a beautiful rainbow. The stubby bushes huddle together to protect the house from the radiating beams of sunlight. At the far corner of the plot stands a large, stately oak tree. The sunlight filters through the green leaves forming shadows on the cool earth. The swaying branches eliminate the little heat which invades the private dwelling.

My backyard was the only work I knew. I spent almost every hour of each day in this dream world. Every minute of each day was spent in a carefree state of mind. I had no worries, and no deadlines were demanded. My friends and I

could play as long as we wanted at each activity. I never thought about tomorrow or the future, only today.

Now as I take a second look outside the kitchen window, I find a different world before my eyes—a world of reality. I notice the vast amounts of weeds needing to be pulled. The spaciousness and privacy of the backyard has diminished. The houses next door sit right upon us, watching over every move we make. The weeping willows on the hill never wave to me anymore. Instead, they sit perched upon the hill protecting my neighbors from my invasion of their privacy. The flowers only produce their beautiful rainbow of colors if they have plenty of water. The shrubs grow up the sides of the house, stripping the siding of paint. The once large, stately oak tree no longer grabs my attention immediately. Now the basketball hoop is the main focus of the backyard. The iron, black pole crowned with the netted hoop displays its victory over my imagination. No longer do I need to think of an activity to play. I already have it assembled before my eyes.

By completing the manual jobs of mowing the lawn, pulling the weeds, and watering the flowers, I am striving to gain back the world which meant so much to me as a young child.

FAILURE?

According the the Webster's New World Dictionary, failure is the act, state or fact of failing. It is a falling short. With failure comes a loss of power or strength. Failure involves a weakening and a breakdown in operation which occurs from neglect or omission. Both a person or a thing can fail or bring about failure. This occurs when one is unsuccessful in obtaining a desired end. Everyday a person will fail on an average of three or four times. Failures occur so

frequently as a result of the many different ways in which people cannot succeed in what they do and how they act.

Mental failure involves not being able to remember important and useful information. For example, a biology student is unable to recognize the characteristics of an amoeba; therefore, he is unable to identify which of the three protozoans is the amoeba. Not being prepared brings about mental failure. When one is not prepared, he loses confidence in himself and what he knows and believes. Too often, people are unwilling the take the extra needed step to reach an aspiration or a goal in their life. Here is a situation demonstrating this. A business student at a prominent university is a year away from graduating. However, he is feeling overburdened by the pressures placed upon him. As a result of these pressures, he drops out of college. He is so close to success, but he falls short in the end. This type of physical failure will most likely effect the rest of this person's life. Social failure results if one if hidden behind a powerful authority or a boastful person. For example, Jennifer is an average student who enjoys being around a large group of friends. Stephanie, the cheerleading captain and the leader of the "the group," never listens to Jennifer's ideas about what to do on Friday night. Instead of defending what she wants to do, Jennifer convinces herself that Stephanie's idea is more exciting then her suggestion. This type of person is unable to find her real identity inside of herself. Shying away from social situations lessens the little strength she has inside, and as a result prevents growth and development of her confidence.

Not all types of failure are directly related to people. There are also failures which involve objects and things. For example, one morning you turn your key in the ignition of your car, but nothing happens. As you try again, this time; however, the noises quit along with the engine. It will not turn over. This type of mechanical failure occurs often due to the demands for mechanical devices in our

society. Since mechanical devices are used so frequently, the necessary procedures enabling the objects to work and to function properly are neglected. Electrical failure results from a broken connection. When lightening strikes an electrical line, that line will either short out or disconnect. The broken connection prevents the current from continuing to flow to its destination. Since the electricity is unable to pass to the conductor, a power failure occurs.

Failures will always occur whether they are caused by someone or something; however, the results are always affected by the cause. For example, a baseball team who loses the seventh game of the World Series in the ninth inning due to an error. There are two outs and runners on first and third. The count on the batter is three balls and two strikes. The pitcher slowly goes into his wind up. The batter watches the ball as it approaches the plate. The bat connects with the ball at the precise moment, but the ball is popped up to the center fielder. It looks as if all hope is lost, but the impossible occurs. The center fielder drops the ball, and the runner on third scores. The fielding team fails to capture the title by falling short by one run. With failure there usually comes some type of loss of power or strength. Since president Nixon went beyond the bounds of a president's powers and rights during the Watergate Scandal, he was forced to resign. His resignation removed all of his presidential powers. Things usually fail due to a weakening and breaking down. An occurrence which demonstrates this weakening and a breaking down is the Great Depression of 1929. The Great Depression was caused by a failure in the economy. Before the Great Depression, people had borrowed large amounts of money which were not insured by the banks, and with this money, stocks were purchased. The banks could not back the value of the dollar so the value of the stocks fell. Some failures can prevent the desired end. If a marriage results in divorce, the vows taken by the couple were not withheld as each person had promised. Also, communication ends, and the

trust once established fades. All of this prevents the marriage from continuing. If one is not prepared for a test, it lessens his or her confidence. Knowing that one is not prepared and not having confidence prevents one from doing well on that test.

Even though it may seem that failure is not positive, one can benefit from failing. After failing, people are usually able to examine the situation and discover that they are at fault. Once the error has been found, the approach previously taken can be changed to reach the desired end. For example, a student receives four D's and two F's on his report card. To improve these grades, the student must change the fault in his study habits. Without failing to such a large degree, the student would not have found this fault in his study habits. Failure encourages one to try harder. People are not satisfied with failure. To prevent failure, people will set goals for themselves and work towards these goals until they are completely reached. Success is taken for granted by everyone. However, after one has failed, he or she learns to appreciate success. People realize that they cannot assume that they will succeed. Instead, they learn a hundred percent devotion is always needed to achieve the success that they have experienced in the past.

Failure is un-American in today's society. Our country emphasizes success. One is stereotyped a failure if he is not number one or does not finish in front of everyone else. However, the real world is full of failure. Failure is seen every day in business, in the things we do, and in each other. Everyone should remember that there can only be one winner. Not everyone can succeed a hundred percent of the time.

A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S SPEECH, "I HAVE A DREAM"

Aristotle believed that the finding and the inventing of a speech were the most important activities concerning the preparation and the presentation of a speech. It is evident through Martin Luther King's speech, "I Have a Dream," that he also stressed the finding and the inventing aspects of a speech. King was sensitive to the rhetorical nuances of language and the power of rhetorical form. Prior to King's leadership with the civil rights movement, the rhetoric of civil rights was mainly confined to legal proceedings. However, King considered the need for a rhetorical transformation. A transformation which would include the teachings of Aristotle and then use of logos, ethos, and pathos. I am going to evaluate how, through the use of rhetoric, King effectively united social, religious, and political consciousness with respect to civil rights.

First, I will examine the use of logos in King's speech. In the opening paragraph of his speech, King mentions the Emancipation Proclamation and how it "came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves" (217). However, in the proceeding paragraph, King points out by his repetitious use of the phrase, "one hundred years later" (217) that no improvement has come to the Negro's way of life. He appeals to the logical fact that the Negro is still not free, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by segregation and discrimination, the Negro lives in poverty in a land of prosperity, and the Negro is still living in his own corner of the world (217). This is King's appeal to history. The Negro was treated this way a hundred years ago, and he is still being treated in this same manner today. Unless Americans do something about this lack of humanitarian treatment right now, it will continue into the future.

King's second logical appeal is his reference to the Declaration of

Independence as a promissory note to all Americans and the resulting claiming of that note by blacks. Negro citizens have come to cash this check of unalienable rights, yet the check has been returned due to "insufficient funds" (217). This economic metaphor allowed King to indict the system and stress the urgency to enact civil rights legislation. This portion of the speech was addressed largely to white Americans and to those in positions of political power. Again, in this logical appeal, King is supporting his appeal by historical facts.

King's third appeal is the focus of his argument. He states, "It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro" (218). King is focusing upon the fact that the black man's "discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality" (218). He stresses that there will be a "rude awakening" (218) if the United States returns to business as usual. King hopes that by expressing this information to white Americans and to politicians that they will finally realize the drive and the intent of the Negro and make a logical decision to take some set of action toward civil rights and the end of racial discrimination.

The last line, a quote from an old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God almighty, we are free at last!" (220), is the last appeal to logos that King makes in his speech. This quote serves to consummate his entire argument by proclaiming that the realization of the moral vision contained in his dream would bring about true freedom. A freedom that would enable America to develop into a great nation.

King is aware, as Aristotle was aware, that logical people judge a rhetor's credibility; therefore, King places his ethical appeals directly prior to two of his most important pathetical appeals. King's strongest appeal to ethos begins with him saying, "But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of

gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds" (218). King urges the black people to restrain against the temptation to allow the movement to slide into physical violence which would counteract the moral impulse of "creative protest." King goes on to further establish this same line of credibility in the next paragraph. "I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering" (219). This appeal to ethos stresses King's knowledge and understanding of the past trials and tribulations of his people. He wants them to be aware that he is qualified to speak on behalf of them since he is conscious of the Negro's previous struggles.

King's third appeal is to pathos. King's first pathetic appeal is a solicitation to blacks and to all those actively involved in the civil rights movement. This appeal revolves around the promissory note and the enthymene, "all men would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (217). King urges his people to refuse to believe that there are "insufficient funds" for the Negro people. The Negro people have equal rights to the funds that are necessary to purchase the promissory note. Now is the time to "cash this check—a check that will give upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice" (217). It is the urgency of now to gain those "unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (217).

King's second appeal to pathos includes everything that is either being withheld or forced upon the Negro. King is stressing that one should never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. As long as the Negro cannot gain lodging in the motels along the highways and the hotels of the city. As long as the Negro's basic mobility is from

a smaller ghetto to a larger one, and as long as the Negro cannot vote (218). Here King is appealing to what the blacks could receive if they were able to cash their promissory note. Everything that is being withheld from the Negroes is among their rights to have as American citizens. King is developing a goal, through this education of "rights," for the Negroes to achieve.

The next appeal to pathos that King makes is his most famous and memorable appeal. It is the appeal from which the speech acquired its name. Within this appeal, there are a couple different enthymemes. One enthymeme being the phrase, "I have a dream" (219), and the second enthymeme is "all men are created equal" (219). Both of these enthymemes play a vital role in this pathetic appeal. The notion of a dream implied a moral vision that cast the civil rights movement from the realm of the particular and the immediate into the realm of the ideal and the ultimate. Dreams are basic to human experience, and visionary dreams are the principle means of defining conditions as they ought to be. By using the term, "I have a dream," King tied the cause of civil rights to a fundamental act, dreaming. King's dream involved a series of ideal depictions of the future when the dream of civil rights had been fully developed. King knew that while one may forget the particulars of certain parts of a dream, he also knew that people would not forget that they had a dream. In this case, a dream in which "all mean are created equal" (219).

Martin Luther King's speech has an incredible persuasive force due to the significant features of King's civil rights rhetoric. King used emotion distinctively to create heightened awareness of the conditions of discrimination. Emotion was also used to evoke belief in the means of movement. Secondly, King employed a strategy of argument by posting concepts and categories that competed with the counterclaims present in the minds and hearts of listeners. Lastly, his discourse reflected a keen sensitivity to the power of oral language and made use

of word formulas, such as metaphors, and word transformations, such as "I have a dream," that emphasized the sense of personal contact with audiences. All of these rhetorical features were effective in not only reaching the present audience, but they were also effective in reaching the implied audience which is the essential moral capacity of human nature.